Rethinking Utopia

Place, Power, Affect

David M. Bell

'David Bell's is one of the most insightful and challenging new voices not only in utopian studies but more broadly in critical theory and cultural studies. In *Rethinking Utopia: Place, Power, Affect*, he conjoins his engaged theoretical analysis with his political, performative, and pedagogical experience and delivers a deeply considered, and truly dialectical, re-functioning of the utopian problematic that will enable both scholars and activists to work with and in the process of utopian transformation in affective and structural ways. Put aside your reading lists, and turn to this book—and in doing so prepare to have your critical paradigm shifted.'

—**Tom Moylan**, Glucksman Professor Emeritus and
Founding Director of the Ralahine Centre for
Utopian Studies at the University of Limerick

'David Bell's book stands out among recent contributions to the field of utopian studies for its theoretical sophistication and originality. The excellent discussion of utopia as place is particularly noteworthy. I warmly recommend this work to all those interested in rethinking utopia as a tool for self-critical radical political thought in the twenty-first century.'

—**Dr. Laurence Davis**, University College Cork, editor of
Anarchism and Utopianism (2014) and *The New Utopian
Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed* (2005)

Rethinking Utopia

Over five hundred years since it was named, utopia remains a vital concept for understanding and challenging the world(s) we inhabit, even in—or rather because of—the condition of 'post-utopianism' that supposedly permeates them. In *Rethinking Utopia* David M. Bell offers a diagnosis of the present through the lens of utopia and then, by rethinking the concept through engagement with utopian studies, a variety of 'radical' theories and the need for decolonizing praxis, shows how utopianism might work within, against and beyond that which exists in order to provide us with hope for a better future.

He proposes paying a 'subversive fidelity' to utopia, in which its three constituent terms: 'good' (eu), 'place' (topos), and 'no' (ou) are rethought to assert the importance of immanent, affective relations. The volume engages with a variety of practices and forms to articulate such a utopianism, including popular education/critical pedagogy; musical improvisation; and utopian literature. The problems as well as the possibilities of this utopianism are explored, although the problems are often revealed to be possibilities, provided they are subject to material challenge.

Rethinking Utopia offers a way of thinking about (and perhaps realizing) utopia that helps overcome some of the binary oppositions structuring much thinking about the topic. It allows utopia to be thought in terms of place and process; affirmation and negation; and the real and the not-yet. It engages with the spatial and affective turns in the social sciences without ever uncritically being subsumed by them; and seeks to make connections to indigenous cosmologies. It is a cautious, careful, critical work punctuated by both pessimism and hope; and a refusal to accept the finality of this or any world.

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Note: there is a brief description of an act of fictional sexual violence on pages 36–37; and a brief reference to sexual violence in activist communities on page 60.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Thinking Utopia as Place

In Yevgeny Zamyatin's novel *We* (completed in 1921), the Mephi resistance movement seize control of the INTEGRAL, a spaceship built by the triumphant OneState in order to colonize other planets with their 'perfect' system of moral and social order. Beyond the immediacy of the moment, the Mephi have no plan. 'What do we do now?', asks new recruit D-503. The reply comes from I-330, a more established member. 'I don't know', she says. 'Do you have any idea how marvelous this is—just to fly, not knowing, no matter where . . .' (Zamyatin, 1993: 193—ellipsis in original). Such a lack of planning seems odd but is entirely consistent with the Mephi's Nietzschean worldview, previously explained by I-330 as an 'anti-Christian' philosophy celebrating 'energy . . . the disruption of equilibrium . . . the torment of perpetual movement.' (1993: 159) For the Mephi, revolution is not a one-off event leading to the establishment of a new order but a permanent movement of creative destruction, albeit with occasional pauses. OneState has betrayed this by slipping into totalitarian stasis, and must be left behind.

Opening a book on utopia with a discussion of *We* may seem a little strange. It is, after all, the first great dystopian satire of the twentieth century: an early missive in the battle against totalitarianism, for which both communism and utopia fast became synonyms. It establishes numerous generic conventions of the literary dystopia, in both content and form. George Orwell was heavily inspired by it in writing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984) and if Aldous Huxley did not read it (as he claimed), then it was an eerie prefiguration of many themes explored in *Brave New World* (1994). Kurt Vonnegut acknowledged its influence on his *Player Piano* (1999). It is regularly hailed as an archetypal work of anti-utopianism: a warning of what will happen if we try to change things for the better. And it is certainly true that it is anti-*a-particular-form-of*-utopianism. OneState's psycho-, bio- and necropolitical apparatuses are to be reviled, not admired. They fix the social into a 'Good' order once-and-for-all: a utopianism that has betrayed itself upon completion and lapsed into an anti-utopianism. There Is No Alternative, OneState says: not in the past, not in the present, and not in the future; not outside and not lurking within. There is nothing against and nothing beyond. There is only the within. Its lifeworld is

a dull empiricism of mathematic formulae, with no space for affective attachments beyond those vertically oriented through the state.

Yet taking the Mephi's struggle into account, it can be said that *We* is not so much an anti-utopian work as an anti-anti-utopian one. The reader is supposed to sympathize with the Mephi after all; and to recognize the relevance of their call for movement away from OneState's stasis as relevant to their own sociopolitical reality. This movement, however, is not towards a predetermined blueprint but is rather for the love of movement itself; and although the theft of the INTEGRAL fails—with D-503 subsequently subject to an operation to remove his imagination (which returns his prior faith in OneState's 'Goodness') and I-330 executed—the novel ends on a suitably anti-anti-utopian note, D-503 noting that 'in the western quarters [of OneState] there is still chaos, roaring, corpses, animals, and, unfortunately, quite a lot of Numbers [people] who have betrayed reason' (Zamyatin, 1993: 225). There is hope here, then: the particular revolution portrayed within may have been foreclosed, but the possibility of further change in the future has not been. There is something within, it is organizing against, and it is pointing beyond.

A similarly anti-anti-utopian perspective can be found in Ilya Kabakov's installation 'The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment', made in Moscow in 1985 and first exhibited at Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in New York in 1988 (Figure intro. 1). This depicts the scene in the apartment of a Soviet citizen who, having 'accumulated the energy' (Groys, 2006: 5) of the space propaganda on the posters adorning his walls, sought to embody their desire by catapulting himself through the roof of his building to join the 'currents of energy' he believes circulate throughout the universe (viewers learn of his intentions through the records of his friends and neighbors, included within the installation so that they might piece the narrative together as if detectives exploring a crime scene). On one level, the work tells of the failure of the Soviet Union: pointing to restrictions on freedom of movement and expression; and of its seemingly totalitarian spatiotemporal grip. Yet just as Zamyatin's Mephi believe the creation of OneState to be a glorious moment (and Zamyatin himself believed the October Revolution to have been a great triumph), 'The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment' does not condemn utopianism so much as its betrayal. This leads the art critic Boris Groys to argue that that The Man frees

> the original utopian energy of the cosmic dream from imprisonment in a particular political and technological system . . . leaving Soviet society behind . . . is not presented as a betrayal of that society but as something nurtured by the same utopian energies that originally led to [its] birth. . . . [T]he desire to cross borders, to overcome utopias, can still be regarded as an expression of that original utopia.
>
> (Groys, 2006: 7)

Yet can we really call the space flights of the Mephi and The Man utopianism, or an expression of utopia? For many scholars of utopia(nism), the answer would clearly be yes—and I have taken this position myself in an earlier work (Bell, 2010). I am, however, no longer convinced by this argument.

Figure intro. 1 Ilya Kabakov, 'The Man Who Flew into Space from His Apartment', 1988

My claim that the Mephi and The Man's space flights are not utopian does not stem from hostility to improvisation in favour of the predetermined blue-print so frequently connected with the concept; nor with concern about where they are going (in a temporal sense): far from it, in fact, for I endorse impro-visation as utopianism in these very pages and outline a utopian freedom that is precisely about embracing the unknown. Rather, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari, my concern stems from the fact that the Mephi and The Man do not

make their flights create; or, more specifically, their flights do not create place. 'The flight was all about escaping', writes Groys of The Man (2006: 6). Escaping the oppressive gravity of the Soviet Union. Escaping dystopia. *Escaping topos*. Hemmed in by an oppressive place—a tiny apartment, a state that restricts freedom of movement—he succumbs to topophobia: the fear of place. Only (outer) space—that which permits movement (against place's stasis) is acceptable for him.

This topophobia is also evident in Zamyatin's essay 'Scythians?', although the relief from place is here found in the earthbound space of the Mongol steppe, which enables the nomadic Scythians to live in a state of continual movement. He imagines a Scythian who

> gallops across the green steppe, hair streaming in the wind. Where is he galloping? Nowhere. What for? For no reason. He simply gallops because he is a Scythian . . . an eternal nomad. Today he is here, tomorrow, there. *Being attached to one place is unbearable to him*. And if in his wild gallop he should chance upon a fenced town, he will give it a wide detour. The very odor of a dwelling, of settled existence . . . is intolerable to the Scythian. He is alive only in the wind.
>
> (Zamyatin, 1991: 21, emphasis added)

This heavily romanticized figure 'can never rest on laurels, he will never be with the practical victors, with those who rejoice and sing "Glory be" ' (1991: 23); whenever the movement of the infinite is stopped they will 'hasten away . . . to freedom' (1991: 22). And he is figured anarchistically—'at all times, under the laws of all the monarchies and republics . . . [Scythians] have been rewarded only by a lodging at government expense—prison' (1991: 23).[1] Here, then, the association is made between place and (unjust) authority: a form of topophobia repeated in some contemporary anarchist approaches to utopian studies.

I do not wish to criticize Zamyatin and Kabakov for producing anti-anti-utopian, rather than utopian, works (indeed, it is surely no accident that both the works discussed here were produced in repressive political environments[2])—but to note that utopianism is not the same as escapism (Sargisson, 2012); albeit that there is undoubtedly a relationship between the two forms. To focus on escape 'misses the most important point,' as Todd May notes (after Deleuze and Guattari), for 'a society is defined by its lines of flight. Lines of flight do not escape from anything, or do not only do that. They are also constitutive. They define whole societies' (2005: 137). The Man's escape may give hope to or 'estrange' those left behind, just as the Mephi's aborted revolution with the INTEGRAL may well provide succor for the Mephi who are struggling against OneState at the close of *We*. But this is at one step removed from utopianism: these escapes may reject closure and inspire attempts to create better place but are not attempts to create better place themselves. Rather, they are born of a profound distrust of place.

The flights of the Mephi and The Man might productively be contrasted with the utopian flight of Shevek in Ursula Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed*. An 'affect alien' (Ahmed, 2010) like the Mephi and The Man—who can no longer 'go along with' the increasingly oppressive operations of power on supposedly utopian, anarchist Anarres—he resists the temptations of topophobia, instead leaving for the neighboring world of Urras. But this is no simple escape: he intends to return, for one thing; and his whole journey is central to the potentially utopian reproduction of Anarres. His lines of flight—his traversal across numerous spaces ('outer' and terrestrial)—creates, rather than negates, place. They are utopian, rather than anti-anti-utopian.

In positioning the flights of the Mephi and The Man as utopian, then, there is a slippage between the embrace of the unknown future on the one hand and the renunciation of place on the other, as if temporal change and place are opposed. Space—understood as both the abstract physical quantity in which things have a position and the more specific 'outer space'—is thus held apart from place, and is celebrated as a form allowing movement and the fleeing of place (Tuan, 1974). *But utopia is a place*: a non-existent one, perhaps (although I will complicate this); but a place nonetheless. To renounce place, to flee it in the belief that place = stasis, is to renounce utopia.

Paying Utopia a Subversive Fidelity

The obvious answer to my objection that the Mephi and The Man's topophobia is not utopian is to point out that utopia is not, in fact, a place. Its etymology suggests 'no place' (*outopia*) at least as much as it means 'good place' (*eutopia*); and much work in utopian studies has sought to reposition utopia as a method or a process. This latter approach, in particular—a utopianism without utopia—could certainly lead to claims that the Mephi and The Man are utopian subjects. Yet this, I suggest, removes utopia's specificity, which comes from the production of place. Whilst sympathetic to the Mephi and The Man, then, this book thinks through how their politics (of embracing the unknown, of utilizing improvisation, of opening up new horizons for action) might create place, and what it might mean to think of this place as utopian, which is to say how it might intra-act with 'the good' and 'no.' It proceeds from the belief that it is possible to create utopias, 'rethinking' the concept in such a way as to get beyond the dichotomy between placeless utopia-as-process and place-bound dystopia.

It does so by paying what I call 'subversive fidelity' to More's term: retaining the concepts that provide it with its conceptual specificity ('good', 'no' and 'place'), but rethinking their meanings and their relations. This is a 'morphological' understanding of utopia, which owes a debt to Michael Freeden's approach to 'ideology.' For him, any given 'ideology' is produced through the specific 'employment' and 'combination' of concepts, which constitute its 'building blocks' (1996). Understanding an ideology (or, in our case, a concept) entails 'identifying, describing and analysing the building blocks that

constitute it and the relationships among them' (1996: 48). Here, the 'core' concepts of utopia are 'good', 'no' and 'place,' and this book explores a productive manner in which they might be understood and relate.[3] Although the influence it can have is limited by the scope of academic publications, it constitutes a 'struggle over the socially legitimated meanings' of these concepts 'and the sustaining arrangements they form'—not necessarily to establish a 'correct usage' (Freeden, 1996: 77), but to provide one that may be useful and politically productive.

These relations are understood as 'intra-actions': a concept I take from the work of Karen Barad and use throughout the book. It refers to the manner in which objects, ideas, bodies, concepts, etc. are never simply pre-given but are reproduced through their relations with other objects, ideas, bodies and concepts (Barad, 2007: 33). Thus, whilst the concepts 'good', 'no' and 'place' can be conceptually separated, in coming together as utopianism they modify and affect each other rather than remaining discrete; just as the spatiotemporal frame of 'within, against and beyond' does (this is a secondary tripartite framing device that undergirds this book more implicitly, although at times I note its operation more explicitly). Here, then, the translation of 'utopia' is less the widely used 'good place that is no place' and more 'no-good-place,' with the dashes signifying an ambiguous and productive consistency between the three constituent terms. Utopia is rethought as a place (re)produced by and which (re)produces particular understandings of the 'good' and 'no.' By rethinking utopia in this way I hope to overcome the slippage of 'the good place that is no place' into 'the good place that can be no place, and which, in seeking a place, becomes its opposite, dystopia' (Levitas, 2003: 3): the claim of populist, anti-utopianism.

The understanding of utopia developed is grounded in practice: I draw heavily on musical improvisation and radical experiments in education, forms that take place within and against the here-and-now of this world whilst also existing beyond it. Each of them has effected change on the world at large (Glen, 1996; Fischlin et al., 2013; Motta & Cole, 2014), but these changes should not be divorced from the forms of internal 'place-making' that they adopt: the ways that their performance spaces and 'classrooms' are organized. It is, primarily, these 'places' that this book focuses on, because they can help us think through what utopia(nism) might be and do. In this, this book differs from perhaps the most prominent (if not dominant) approach in utopian studies, which explores utopias from the outside; or, more accurately, focuses on the relationship between utopia and the subject who encounters it externally. Whilst this clearly necessitates engaging with the content of these utopias, the focus is largely on their function as forms that 'educate our desire' for a better world, and/or estrange us from that which exists. Utopias are thus positioned as texts and read hermeneutically, even where they take a form that would not generally be considered as a text.

I also engage further with the narrative of *We* and, in particular, with *The Dispossessed*. One of the most important works in the revival of utopian

fiction of the 1970s, it has been widely written about in utopian studies (e.g., Ferns, 1999; Davis & Stillman, eds., 2005; Burns, 2008; Moylan, 2014) and my reading of it is heavily indebted to many of these works. My focus, however, is perhaps a little different in that I am interested not so much in its operation as a literary text (though see Bell, 2016, for a reading that takes this into account), but for the organization of and struggle on Anarres, the 'place' in which much of it is set (there are overlaps here with geocriticism [Westphal, 2011; Tally, 2013]). An anarchist 'utopia' (but ambiguously so), this can be seen to 'scale up' many of the place-making practices—both good and bad—of musical improvisation and radical experiments in education such that we can think through how they might function beyond the cramped spaces for such praxis in the here-and-now.

Ambiguity

Utilizing the 'good' and the 'no'—the affirmative and the negative—simultaneously introduces a constitutive ambiguity to utopia. Indeed, *The Dispossessed* was originally published with the subtitle '*An Ambiguous Utopia*', although I do not seek to explore all of the ambiguities the text presents. This ambiguous tension is not dialectical—at least not in the sense that it works towards a resolution—but is productive nonetheless, and in thinking it through I invoke the spirit of David Eden, for whom it is a:

> mistake to . . . create a paradigm that sees some kind of split [or, at least, an absolute split] between "Noes" and "Yeses". Rather [can't] it be that our attempts to fundamentally change social relations always have these elements bound up within each other. It is an error to argue that one must precede the other.
>
> (2012: 240)

Utopia, then, is constituted by 'ambiguous' oscillatory intra-actions between its three constituent terms. This is productive, and means that utopia can never settle into a final form. Indeed, to claim that such a form has been achieved is to announce not utopia but dystopia (it is this stasis that is so often understood as an integral feature of place in topophobic anti-utopianism and anti-anti-utopianism). Given this, no evaluation of whether a particular place is a utopia can ever be final: there is no omnipotent vantage point from which such a judgement can be made. Not only, then, is utopia constituted by ambiguity, but any claim to utopia must itself be ambiguous. This leads to a third, 'meta-ambiguity', in which the more these ambiguities are noted and highlighted, the greater the chance utopianism has of succeeding.

Although this book is grounded in praxis, it is not an 'empirical' work, at least not in the narrow sense in which the term is normally invoked (it does, however, have resonances with Deleuze's expansive empiricism (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007: vii)). Although it engages with actually existing utopias, it does

not offer an analysis of a dominant or emerging contemporary tendency or trend in utopian practice (though it is, of course, conditioned by existing tendencies and trends: no work can escape history!). Nor does it seek to provide a historical or conceptual overview of various forms of utopia(nism). Rather, it identifies, amplifies and outlines features from various place-making practices; and thinks them alongside concepts drawn from political, critical and utopian theory in order to develop an understanding of utopia(nism) that I believe it would be politically productive to adopt. This must absolutely not be understood as a 'theory of everything', however: the struggle necessary to create a better world will necessarily entail tactical, strategic and pragmatic issues that are beyond the scope of this (and indeed any) utopianism.

Hoping (against Hope)

There is a strong conceptual link between utopianism and hope, not least given the centrality of Ernst Bloch's mammoth *The Principle of Hope* to utopian studies. Whilst I am critical of the ways in which hope and utopia are sometimes conflated, it is clearly impossible to be a committed utopian without some sense of hope; and although hope is not a central theme in this book, it is a quietly guiding principle: an undercurrent that ebbs and flows beneath its arguments. This hope should be differentiated from both a vaguely optimistic fatalism *and* confident expectation. Here, it is useful to turn to Ernst Bloch's lecture 'Can Hope Be Disappointed', in which he notes that:

> Hope is not confidence. If it could not be disappointable, it would not be hope. That is part of it. Otherwise, it would be cast in a picture. It would let itself be bargained down. It would capitulate and say, that is what I had hoped for. Thus, hope is critical and can be disappointed. However, hope still nails a flag on the mast, even in decline, in that the decline is not accepted, even when this decline is still very strong. . . . Hope is surrounded by dangers, and it is the consciousness of danger and at the same time the determined negation of that which continually makes the opposite of the hoped-for object possible.
>
> (1988: 16–17)

Hope, then, is distinguished from 'confidence' through its careful grounding in the material conditions of the present—what Bloch called 'the darkness of the lived moment' (1986: 1178).[4] The common phrase 'to hope against hope' is thus tautological: hope is *always* against (a caricature of) itself, and even where we think there is no hope we can always hope we are wrong (cf. Berardi, quoted in Graeber, 2008: 3).

Even here, though, there is a risk of hope functioning as an ahistorical, essential property of human existence: an *a priori* Pollyanna-ish faith that one clings to in the face of a world which gleefully absorbs this hope whilst stubbornly refusing to permit that which might reasonably be hoped for.[5] Hope, here, is

a form of what Lauren Berlant calls 'cruel optimism', in which the subject develops an attachment to promises of something more, better and beyond—promises that are embedded in (and perpetuate) conditions that make their flourishing impossible (Berlant, 2011; Eagleton, 2015). The hope that informs this book, by way of contrast, stems from an assessment of particular practices into which it feeds back: it is grounded in materiality rather than vapidly floating free as a vague disposition. Through this grounding it maintains a critical awareness that any such practices will be fraught with danger. To expand that around which hope circulates requires struggle, and a knowledge that such struggle will never fully succeed: there is a melancholy to fulfilment (Bloch in Bloch & Adorno, 1988: 2). Such a lack of certainty can result in—and be caused by—anxiety, meaning that there is 'an intimacy between anxiety and hope' (McManus, 2011: muse.jhu.edu), but in the sense that this can work to open space for action this is by far preferable to the intimacy between 'bad hope' and 'bad despair' (Warren, 2016: salvage.zone).

Structure

True to Bloch's claim that utopianism is grounded in and proceeds from material realities no matter how unpleasant, Chapter One considers the supposedly 'post-utopian' here-and-now of capital and the state: a world in which, we are told, there is no longer a need for utopianism. However, the chapter argues that this claim is in itself utopian, in that it claims the best possible state of affairs for the world as is. The post-utopian, then, is held to be the most-utopian. The chapter explores the imbrication of these two forms, along with anti-utopianism, which I argue should be understood not simply as a cognitive approach to the world but also as a form of material violence that clamps down on the (possibility of generating) utopian alternatives to the status quo. It argues that the world reproduced through this strange consistency of utopianism, anti-utopianism and the post-utopian is best thought of as a dystopia: a bad place. I note how affective 'biopedagogies' of happiness are utilized in an attempt to maintain a 'disaffected consent' in this dystopia.

In order to move away from colloquial understandings of dystopia, which position it as a 'bad place' because it limits the freedom of the individual in the name of the power of the collective, I offer a reading of two utopian texts, each of which is held to have relevance for understanding the world we currently find ourselves in. The first of these is Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, a text that clearly displays the relationship between utopia, anti-utopianism and dystopia and which, as I argue, should not be read (as it often is) as a satire of Soviet society per se. Against readings that position this as a text celebrating the freedom of the individual, I draw on Michel Foucault's concept of disciplinary power to argue that the figure of the individual is complicit in—not resistant to—dystopia. I argue that the Mephi's anti-anti-utopian resistance in *We* is not associated with the expression of individualism but with the breakdown of the individual and collective action. I also note the manner in which this resistance

is associated with problematically romantic notions of femininity, Indigeneity and 'the natural', all of which are understood to exist 'outside' the dystopian space. Whilst rejecting any such clear-cut distinction between dystopia and resistance, and the caricatured depiction of these forms, I argue that they are areas which remain pertinent for discussions of how to go beyond our here-and-now. The precise nature of the collectivity required to go beyond OneState is unexplored, however, and it is this gap that serves as a catalyst for much of the argument of this book.

The second dystopian text explored is *Code 46*, a 2003 film written by Frank Cottrell Boyce and directed by Michael Winterbottom. This, I argue, portrays a dystopia constructed around Gilles Deleuze's concept of 'control', which supplements disciplinary power in our present. Where discipline operates through discrete spaces and a strict regimentation of time and space, constructing individuals as it proceeds, control is much more nebulous. It works continuously across time and space, modulating behaviour rather than clearly shaping it. It also breaks individuals down into banks of data, a process that constructs variously embodied identities. Yet much older models of sovereign power remain important in the world of *Code 46* too, and I note the use of exile and borders as anti-utopian technologies.

In order to theorize dystopia more fully, I think through the meaning of and relationship between 'bad' and 'place' in societies of discipline and control. I draw on Gilles Deleuze's reading of Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics* to argue that the 'bad' refers to operations of power (or 'domination'), which limit the capacity of bodies to affect and be affected in unexpected ways. Discipline, I note, uses and creates place as the terrain of this domination, but the domination of control seems to erode the very possibility of place, resulting in dystopia as a bad non-place: a form seemingly lacking a terrain on which struggle might be possible. Drawing on the work of Bernard Stiegler, I suggest that this erodes the very possibility of ethics, understood as that which provides subjects with their place in affective circulations. The task of utopianism, I suggest, must be to produce ethically good places in the face of this situation.

If our world is a dystopia, then it is, perhaps, a critical dystopia: a bad place in which utopian modes of resistance have not been entirely foreclosed. Chapter Two explores some of these, considering the forms that utopianism takes in our present. This is, of course, a situated and partial exploration that privileges my own experiences and interests as a white, middle class, cissexual man living in the UK, although I note the importance of looking outside Eurocentric praxis for thinking through contemporary manifestations of utopianism. The chapter starts by considering thoroughly unpleasant and increasingly predominant far-right utopianism. This, I suggest, is best understood not as a negation of liberal post-utopianism but as the extrapolation of some of its tendencies. Indeed, I argue that some of these tendencies are also evident in ostensibly left-wing utopianisms and should be avoided by those seeking a better world.

Such far-right politics would, of course, lead to ruin; and it is to ruins that my attention then turns. In a world where left-utopianism struggles to maintain

a grip and in which the threats of outright fascism and apocalyptic climate change loom ever larger, I note that ruins are frequently deployed as a utopia—aesthetically, if not politically. This, however, can only empower the viewer from a distance: for those whose daily reality is *already* one of colonial and/or climate change driven ruination, no affective attachment with these ruins is possible. They are empowering only to the privileged outsider.

From here I turn to consider contemporary leftist melancholy. Like the fascination with ruins, this is marked by a romanticism, with laments over the loss of utopian visions at the 'end of history'. Such lamentations lead many to identify not so much with a utopian future, but rather with utopian futures past. I argue that this disposition finds particularly clear expression in 'hauntological' music produced in the United Kingdom, but suggest that it also animates many recent attempts to mobilize a utopianism around the return of the welfare state. In their less explicitly nostalgic modes, these mobilize around a post-work utopianism built around automation technologies and the implementation of Universal Basic Income, although I argue that these insufficiently attend to globalized, gendered, classed and racialized divisions of labour; and privilege the demands (and thus interests) of those already relatively privileged in global terms above those of some of the planet's poorest people.

Whilst post-work utopianism refuses to provide details of life in utopia, I then turn to consider 'Fully Automated Luxury Communism' (FALC)—a closely related heuristic concept that promises to communize luxury in a world where toil and time spent working has been minimized. Whilst acknowledging its tongue-in-cheek playfulness, I note that this, too, is marked by a certain (racialized) nostalgia, and compare it to the genre of Cockaygne or 'peasants' paradise': popular visions of worlds in which there is (supposedly) no want. This, I note, is somewhat disconcerting, given that the subjects who want for nothing in these visions are generally male, and that this supposed paradise actually serves as cover for sexual abuse. My point here is not that FALC does similarly (though we should not rule out the possibility that it might), but rather that its futural visions are used to discipline many of those who are most disadvantaged in the present.

This, I suggest, should lead us to consider the present—and not the future—as the proper terrain of struggle for a utopian politics. Drawing on (and reacting against) Franco 'Bifo' Berardi and the blogging collective Out of the Woods, I argue for a utopianism that operates first and foremost *within* the here-and-now but which, in doing so, creates the future as an open, yet-to-be-determined space unfolding from the here-and-now. This does not, however, mean uncritically celebrating supposedly utopian localisms in the here-and-now, which all too often resonate with both capitalism and reactionary critiques of capital; or function through the romanticization of poverty. I illustrate this with a critique of *Code 46*'s depiction of Jebel Ali as offering a quasi-utopian 'outside' to the dystopian world in which the majority of the film is set. Against this ahistorical localism, however, I argue that it is important to consider the role that the local can play as a terrain of struggle, not least given its importance to Indigenous

and peasant cultures that maintain a degree of autonomy from capital and the state; and which have much to offer the kind of utopianism this book seeks to develop.

Chapter Three turns to consider approaches to utopia, utopianism and the utopian developed in the academic field of utopian studies. Whilst the arguments explored here are referred back to in future chapters, this is perhaps something of a specialist chapter that some readers may wish to skip. Alternatively, it may function as a useful critical introduction to the field even for those who have no interest in the arguments made elsewhere in the book.

The chapter begins by noting the hostility to 'perfection' found in much utopian studies work. Despite this, I argue that we should be too hasty in disavowing perfection from utopianism, and draw on the work of J. C. Davis and Krishan Kumar, both of whom see utopianism as orienting itself to perfection, albeit they understand the term differently. Drawing on John Protevi, I argue that they see utopia as a 'hylomorphic form': an imposition of 'Good place' on otherwise empty or chaotic space. In this, utopianism's historic complicity in both colonialism and the nation state is made clear.

I then turn to more prominent approaches in utopian studies which argue that utopia is not—or should not be—oriented to perfection. There are, I suggest, three main positions here, although these are not mutually exclusive and many theorists move across them. The first—associated with a diverse range of thinkers, including Tom Moylan, Lucy Sargisson, Ruth Levitas and Fredric Jameson—is that utopia should be considered as a heuristic form rather than a blueprint: a technology that either (or simultaneously) provides a positive vision of how life could be, which can then be debated (such discussion being an important part of utopianism); or which estranges us from the here-and-now by providing us with an alternative place from which it can be historicized and found lacking. At times this second form dominates to such an extent that this approach might more accurately be understood as a form of anti-anti-utopianism, as Fredric Jameson notes. I pay particularly close attention to Tom Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia', which has significant resonances with the understanding of utopia developed in this book, albeit that he positions it as a literary form rather than a spatial one.

This heuristic approach to utopia is powerful (I note, in fact, that this book is testament to the existence of such a process). Nonetheless, I suggest that in focusing primarily on the relationship between utopia as text and its reader, it risks overlooking the *content* of utopian visions. Furthermore, at times this utopian method is itself referred to as utopia. This, I suggest, risks losing the specificity of the concept, which should be grounded in place.

The second approach I consider positions utopia as a primarily temporal operation: a disturbance of the here-and-now by the not yet, or the there-and-then. This relocates utopia from a beyond to the present, resonating with the argument outlined towards the end of the previous chapter. Ernst Bloch is the most famous theorist here, although I also draw heavily on the work of Jose Esteban Muñoz, who—quite rightly—insists that marginalized subjects

are particularly likely to actualize such a utopianism. Such an understanding, I suggest, helps to avoid the hylomorphism that remains latent in some heuristic approaches to utopianism, but by positioning utopia as a temporal rather than spatial form leaves the places produced by such operations somewhat undertheorized. It is, I suggest, a utopianism without utopia: a position made more explicit by the feminist process utopianism of Lucy Sargisson and Angelika Bammer, to which I then turn. These display a topophobia similar to the Mephi, with place implicitly understood as a masculine imposition of closure and order on feminine processes of becoming. Whilst sympathetic to the politics of these arguments, I suggest that in eschewing utopia as place they lose some of the specificity of the concept of utopia.

The third utopian studies approach considered can be seen as an attempt to address this, for it focuses more explicitly on utopian spatial arrangements. Here I note that the tension between the spatial (associated with closure) and the temporal (associated with openness) remains, something most clearly articulated by David Harvey. Thinkers such as Uri Gordon and Laurence Davis are held to think through this, however, such that the place of utopia is a form open to and enabling of constant transformation in the manner of much contemporary prefigurative politics. Yet even where specific places are engaged with, there is sometimes a reluctance to refer to these as utopias, with some arguing for a utopianism that rejects utopia.

The chapter closes with my own attempt to define utopia, utopianism and the relationship between them. I suggest that the former should be used to name a place (re)produced in accordance with an understanding of the 'good' and the 'no,' with the latter referring either to spatial practice that (re)produces such utopias or to a set of beliefs that advocates the (re)production of utopia. This, of course, leaves the precise meaning of 'place', 'good' and 'no' up for discussion, and it is this task that the rest of the book addresses. From here on, 'utopia', 'utopianism' and 'utopian' are used largely in a normative sense, to refer to that which I believe to be desirable, rather than in an analytic sense.

Chapter Four considers how the 'good' and the 'place' of utopia's etymology might intra-act. I begin with Yi-Fu Tuan's widely quoted claim that place is space 'made meaningful.' However, I reject the argument that this 'meaning' is threatened by temporality and the global, arguing instead that it is produced through immanent intra-actions. These, I suggest, are always-already present in space, meaning that any clear-cut distinction between space and place cannot be sustained, troubling the hylomorphism central to colonialism and statism. I turn to Doreen Massey to suggest that space is transformed into place by its articulation, which is to say that space becomes place when particular meanings are extrapolated from it. This is necessarily a situated and partial process: there is no single vantage point from which space can be surveyed and articulated as place. To illustrate this, I explore the articulation of Anarres by its inhabitants—as articulated in *The Dispossessed*—as resonating with such an understanding of place.

The task for utopians, I suggest, is to think through what it might mean for the intra-actions that produce space to be 'good,' such that place can be thought of as 'good place.' Here I return to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza to develop an affective concept of the 'common good,' in which good intra-actions are those that increase the capacity of bodies to affect *and* be affected. Such affections are experienced as joy, which should be distinguished from (although not absolutely opposed to) the dystopian operations of happiness described in Chapter One. I expand on this analysis by thinking through the meaning and operation of 'power,' 'freedom' and 'democracy' for a utopian politics, a task undertaken through frequent references to the organization of Anarres, and to the 'actually existing' utopianisms of musical improvisation and radical experiments in education. This, I suggest, helps us not just to think through what it means to call these places-in-process 'utopias,' but to rethink the concept of utopia itself.

The chapter then turns to consider the nature of utopian subjectivity. Referring back to Foucault and Deleuze's work on how dominatory modes of power construct and break down individuals, I consider what it might mean for a utopian concept of power to produce individuals. Drawing on Gilbert Simondon's concept of individuation, I suggest that the individual might be (continuously) (re)produced through the good intra-actions into which they enter. This also troubles notions of collectivity as a form hostile to, rather than constitutive of, individuality; and I suggest that the concept of the 'multitude,' as developed from Spinoza, can be instructive here. This names a collective form that does not deny difference, but rather coheres around that which bodies have in common. In this, it serves as a form from which individuation is strengthened, rather than weakened. I caution against identifying this with particular forms of labour in contemporary capitalism, however, and do not share the optimism of thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who overestimate the strength of the multitude vis-à-vis global capitalism.

Following this, I explore the role of identity in this utopia(nism). I argue that gendered, racialized and classed identities developed through systems of oppression cannot simply be disavowed in the name of a spontaneous utopianism or a hypothetical post-identity future. Rather, as constituent parts of the world *and* of struggle within and against that world, identities must form part of the materiality of utopianism, even as that utopianism transforms what such identities are and might be. The precise manner in which this operates varies, however, depending on the particular way that the identity in question intra-acts with domination. I note that the utopian practices I consider cannot be separated from struggles that have organized around racialized, gendered and classed forms of identity. This is not, however, to say that any permanence should be attached to these forms of identity, and as these struggles unfold they will transform and may abolish such identities. I also argue that utopian agency should not be limited to the human (not least given the manner in which particular identities have been excluded from that category), but also must take into account more-than-human bodies, including the agency of space itself.

The chapter closes by considering the need for utopias to continually engage with their broader milieu. Just as borders in OneState and the world of *Code 46* serve the interests of dystopian power, so too can an unnecessary walling off of utopia from the social see it ossify towards utopia. This does not, however, mean that the strategic use of borders can never be necessary, and I also think through the importance of structures that function as boundaries, which prevent particular forms of domination from emerging with a utopian space.

Whilst each of the chapters is designed such that it can be read in isolation from the others, I would caution against reading Chapter Three without also reading Chapter Four, which outlines the role that the 'no' plays in the utopianism being developed. This, I suggest, forms an 'ambiguous consistency' with the good, such that the 'no' strengthens the 'good' and vice versa; although this does not mean that there is not, at times, tension between them. This no, I suggest, has two main functions. Firstly, utopianism within our here-and-now must 'say no' to the world as it exists such that this world is made impossible. It operates *against* as well as *within* and *beyond* the here-and-now. Utopianism, in the conditions of the present, is an impossibility outside the cramped spaces it can wrestle for itself through struggle and praxis. When it is understood as a broader possibility within the conditions of the present, it ceases to be utopian. When utopianism is not positioned through such hostility it becomes complicit in the operation of that world, at best functioning as a form of cruel optimism that sustains bad attachments.

I focus, in particular, on four forms that utopianism must oppose. The first is the state, and here I am in disagreement with a number of utopian studies scholars. Whilst compromise with and negotiation of the state may sometimes be absolutely necessary in political struggle, my claim is that to do so is not utopian. The state, I suggest, is not a form that utopians can seize control of: it is a technology for repressing and co-opting utopianism. Yet it must not be fetishized: it is not simply a geopolitical form hovering above the body politic, but is produced through modes of relating immanent to the body politic. This understanding is important for the argument made in the second half of the chapter. The state, of course, governs in the interests of capital, and this is the second form that I argue utopianism must pitch itself against. I consider the merits and drawbacks of using the term 'communism' to signal this, although I note that such decisions can and should be made immanently to struggle rather than by theorists working from (a relative) outside.

I then turn to consider how utopianism must operate against dystopian forms of identification: a position implicit in the previous chapter's discussion of identity but which also operates in a (hopefully productive) tension with it. I argue that it is certainly necessary to abolish whiteness and masculinity as political identities, although such a move will first entail recognizing them as identities, rather than as the 'default' position from which the difference of identity is measured. I consider critiques of 'identity politics' and arguments for the immediate self-abolition of identity. Whilst I acknowledge that these make important points, I suggest that whilst identity still serves as a marker

around which people organize within and against the present, it is wrong to proceed from self-abolition as a starting point. Rather, a careful path should be forged between the autonomous flourishing of identity-as-difference and the abolition of identity-as-domination. I suggest that the work of José Esteban Muñoz and Jasbir K. Puar might be instructive in this regard.

The final form that I suggest utopianism must operate against is colonialism, and in particular settler colonialism, with which utopianism has a long history of imbrication. As such, it is not just that utopianism must work as a form of decolonization but that utopianism itself must be 'unsettled.' My hope is that the approach outlined thus far may serve to do this, but I draw on the important work of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang to argue that unless this metaphoric decolonization is accompanied by a commitment to a material, political decolonization, it will simply serve to disavow, rather than challenge, utopianism's role in settler colonialism (and vice versa).

Utopianism cannot simply operate against this world, however, but, because domination is immanent to all social forms, must operate against *any* world, including its own. The second half of Chapter Five explores the operation of this internal 'no,' drawing heavily on Sara Ahmed's concept of the killjoy—an 'affect alien' who cannot share in the 'joy' of a given place because that joy operates at its expense. In contrast to those who would position these killjoys as anti-utopian subjects holding back the future and introducing 'bad feelings' to an otherwise good place, I argue that they are, paradoxically, often the *most* utopian subjects, for by articulating domination within a particular place they open it up to further change. In this, the 'no' and the 'good' that constitute utopia work in ambiguous consistency, working with and against each other to (re)produce place as no-good place, although I note that any evaluation regarding the qualities of a given place can apply only contingently: there is no spatiotemporal vantage point from which a place can be 'judged' once-and-for-all.

I demonstrate the 'utopian' work of killjoying through an exploration of the characters Shevek and Bedap in *The Dispossessed,* with their anger at the emergence of domination on Anarres playing a central role in their commitment to political struggle. I also draw on those who point out the operation of immanent domination within musical improvisation; and on Elizabeth Ellsworth's critique of the ossification of principles of critical pedagogy such that they work to obscure, rather than challenge, domination within the classroom. In each case, attending to these problems and ambiguities—and struggling against them—serves to keep the place in question open, such that the bodies that compose it can affect and be affected in an increasing number of ways.

It is another form of alienation with which I close the chapter, however, and which illustrates the sheer unknowability-in-advance of utopianism. Switching from a focus on the social relations between musical improvisers to the music they produce; and to a more personal mode of analysis, I recount my early experiences listening to improvised free jazz. Here, I experienced the radical unknown of a utopianism firmly grounded in the material of history, but reaching well

beyond, constructing places that I still struggle to make sense of. To embrace utopia(nism), I argue, is to embrace this struggle.

Notes

1. 'Scythian' is a vague term that refers to an ethnolinguistic group of nomads on the Mongol steppe for around a thousand years from 600 BC onwards. What little is known of their social structure suggests it was hierarchical, and although they have long had a reputation as an archetypal 'barbarian horde,' they established key trading routes between Asia and Europe (Rolle, 1989; Beckwith, 2009).
2. This love of movement cannot be reduced to the experience of life in the Eastern Bloc, however. Indeed, it appears in a particularly pure form in 'The Departure,' an (extremely) short story by Franz Kafka, written in 1920:

> I ordered my horse to be brought from the stables. The servant did not understand my orders. So I went to the stables myself, saddled my horse, and mounted. In the distance I heard the sound of a trumpet, and I asked the servant what it meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me and asked: "Where is the master going?" "I don't know," I said, "just out of here, just out of here. Out of here, nothing else, it's the only way I can reach my goal." "So you know your goal?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "I've just told you. Out of here—that's my goal."
>
> (Kafka, 1971: 497)

3. My thanks to Matthew Francis and Eloise Harding for discussions on Freeden's work.
4. Poetic though this phrasing is, I have done my best to avoid metaphors of utopian light and dystopian darkness given their imbrication with white supremacy, as evidenced in constructions of Africa as a 'dark continent' to which (Christian) Europeans could bring light (Brantlinger, 1985; Jarosz, 1992), similar claims about the Indigenous population of Turtle Island/the United States of America as living in 'darkness' (as in John Gast's 1872 painting *Manifest Destiny*, for example); or the opening to the inscription on the grave of Scipio Africanus, a servant to the Earl of Suffolk who died aged 18 in 1720:

> I who was Born a PAGAN and a SLAVE
> Now Sweetly Sleep a CHRISTIAN in my Grave
> What tho' my hue was dark my SAVIOUR'S Sight
> Shall Change this darkness into radiant light
> (Fryer, 1984: 62)

5. For the influence of Jewish eschatology on Bloch, see Raulet (1976), Mendes-Flohr (1983), Rabinbach (1985). It would of course be entirely unfair to refer to this as Pollyanna-ish: it is in the manner in which hope is often deployed by others that I detect a rather uncritical optimism.

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1 Rethinking the Present; or, Our Post-Utopian, Most-Utopian, Anti-Utopian Dystopia

Introduction

In *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* the titular orphan and not-yet wizard enters a forbidden area of Hogwarts, his school, where he stumbles across a 'magnificent mirror, as high as the ceiling, with an ornate gold frame, standing on two clawed feet.' Around its top is an inscription: '*Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi,*' which, when read backwards, reads 'I show not your face but your heart's desire' (Rowling, 1997: 152). Gazing into it, Harry does see his reflection, but soon realizes that it is accompanied by numerous other figures. After a short while, he realizes that he is 'looking at his family, for the first time in his life' (Rowling, 1997: 153). He loses track of time, but eventually has to leave for fear of being discovered. Over the following days he sneaks back to the mirror but before long Professor Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts, reveals himself and states that he has been aware of Harry's mirror-gazing all along. This, he warns Harry, is dangerous, for the mirror:

> shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts. . . . However, this mirror will give us neither knowledge [nor] truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible. . . . It does not do to dwell on dreams and forget to live, remember that.
>
> (1997: 157)

For Ruth Levitas, this episode is evidence of a lamentable anti-utopianism at the heart of popular culture. Dumbledore (and, Rowling, by extension), is criticized for dismissing dreaming as 'dangerously escapist', advice that she argues should be ignored by utopians. 'Defending utopia', Levitas states, 'entails insisting that the identification and expression of the deepest desires of our hearts and minds, and those of others, is a necessary form of knowledge and of truth' (2013: 3).

Here, however, I side with Dumbledore, although I doubt he (or J.K. Rowling) would share the full extent of my reasoning unless, perhaps, he has a penchant for queer theory as well as knitting. Harry's mirror-gazing *is* escapist,

and though the grief he experiences as a result of never knowing his parents is entirely healthy, becoming trapped in a fantasy world in which they did not die is, perhaps, not. Utopianism, if it is to be more than a useless (if not necessarily dangerous) escapism, must not eschew the 'real world' so readily. Indeed, it is only through accepting the fact of his parents' death that Harry can explore—and struggle against—the unjust material reality in which he finds himself (and which, he learns, was responsible for his parent's deaths). Our 'deepest desires', to the extent that they exist, are not necessarily liberatory (see Piippo, 2009, for a theorizing of this in relation to The Mirror of Erised). The joys they seek may be sad joys complicit in contemporaneous forms of domination. Harry's 'deepest desires', as they stand at this point in time, are undoubtedly a hindrance to his—and the wizarding world's—flourishing (Berlant, 2011).[1]

In seeking to provide the ground from which a viable utopianism might be developed, this chapter also functions as a kind of mirror: one held up not to our deepest desires, but to the world of capitalism and states, as it 'actually exists' and as it is depicted in two works of utopian fiction—Yevgeny Zamyatin's novel *We*, first published in 1924, and *Code 46*, a 2003 film directed by Michael Winterbottom, with a screenplay by Frank Cotterell Boyce. Like all mirrors, it mediates what it reflects, and frames it in a particular way. Here, that frame is utopia, and its related concepts—dystopia, anti-utopia and post-utopia. These are employed as analytic rather than normative referents, and their imbrication is outlined. Yet despite the chapter's rather gloomy depiction, occasional instances of hope are reflected: cracks that this book slowly tries to wedge itself into and expand.

The Post-Utopian = the Most Utopian: Anti-Utopianism, Post-Utopianism, Dystopia

Shortly after the London riots of 2011, the 'ultra-left propaganda machine' Deterritorial Support Group (DSG) produced a poster emblazoned with the phrase 'THE POST-POLITICAL = THE MOST POLITICAL' in lurid yellow (Figure 1.1).[2] Behind this was an image of a police officer in riot gear (and with dog) standing outside a row of houses, from which a number of Black residents anxiously look out. The photograph was taken during the racist, punitive 'crackdown' on 'criminals' who had participated in the London riots of 2011: riots that we were repeatedly told (by commentators both right and left) were 'apolitical.'

If I read DSG correctly here, they are not simply suggesting that the riots *were* political, but are also critiquing our 'post-political' present more broadly (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014; Millington, 2016). This present is one in which we are told we are on the verge of the end of history (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992), violence has declined to historic lows (Pinker, 2011) and ideology is of the past (Bell, 2000). There are no more utopias because there is no more need for utopia (Shklar, 1957). All we need to do is materialize this post-ideological shift by spreading liberal democracy and capitalism; and defend existing liberal

Figure 1.1 THE POST-POLITICAL = THE MOST POLITICAL, Deterritorial Support
        Group, 2011

democracies from those racialized others who wish to take us 'back to the dark
ages' and 'barbarism' (Huntington, 1996).

   And yet. What is the image on DSG's poster if not politics? What is it, if not
state violence? What is it, if not history? What is it, if not white supremacy?

Our present has not progressed beyond these forms but amplified them to a triumphant ubiquity and declared them over and done with. And what is ubiquitous so easily disappears: at least for subjects who benefit from that ubiquity. We inhabit the bottom of a slippery slope of equation and conflation, where opposition to totalitarianism becomes opposition to utopianism becomes opposition to ideology becomes opposition to the political.

This is not the end of utopia but its disavowal. Utopianism is held to be 'over there' or, 'back then.' There is simply no need for it anymore. Others were utopian: the communists, the Nazis. The crackpots. The eccentrics. *But not us.* We just happen to inhabit a world in which the best possible system of governance has been developed. The idiocy hides where it is safest: in plain sight, conveniently forgetting that the architects of our current social order once called for utopian visions in order to compete with socialism (Hayek, 1960; Liggio, 1981). They won that battle, of course; and there is no use for utopianism in their utopia. The ultimate triumph of utopia is the disappearance of utopia. *The post-utopian is the most utopian.*

Astute commentators of the utopian have long noted, of course, that anti-utopianism is also a particular form of utopianism in that it claims perfection (or as near as possible) for present forms of social organization (Harvey, 2000: 194–195; Moylan, 2000: 75, 183–187; Geoghegan, 2008: 3; Clark, 2009: 13; Newman, 2009: 209; Balasopoulos, 2011: 62–63; Levitas, 2011: 34). Our so-called political 'realism'—so often opposed to 'utopianism' by those on the left (Fisher, 2009a) and the right (Carr, 1946)—reveals itself as a particular kind of utopianism. Slavoj Žižek puts it well:

> After denouncing all the "usual suspects" for utopianism, then, perhaps the time has come to focus on the liberal utopia itself. This is how one should answer those who dismiss any attempt to question the fundamentals of the liberal-democratic-capitalist order as being themselves dangerously utopian: what we are confronting in today's crisis are the consequences of the utopian core of this order itself. While liberalism presents itself as anti-utopianism embodied, and the triumph of neoliberalism as a sign that we have left behind the utopian projects responsible for the totalitarian horrors of the twentieth century [i.e., the post-utopian 'moment'], is it not becoming clear that the true utopian epoch was that of the happy Clintonite '90s, with its belief that we had reached "the end of history", that humanity had finally found the formula for the optimal socio-economic order.'
>
> (2009: 79, cf. p. 3: 5)[3]

Here, anti-utopianism is used to name ideological positions—both 'intellectual' and 'popular' (and sometimes avowedly anti-intellectual)[4]—which hold that any attempt to go beyond the status quo is inherently dangerous or useless (Sargisson, 2012: 22–31). As Alexander Baker (2015) has pointed out, however, it is an error to use anti-utopianism to refer solely to such ideational processes, for it also manifests itself as physical and material violence, meted

out by both state and non-state actors (often acting in concert): queer-bashing, commie-bashing, transphobia, catcalling, racism, misogyny, anti-vagrancy laws, state borders, evictions and the violent policing of protests, for example, are not simply designed to uphold the status quo (implicitly positioned as a utopia) but to prevent alternative ways of organizing space and time from taking root and to spread fear throughout those who seek to do so (Clough, 2012). This violence is all too frequently overlooked in utopian studies accounts of anti-utopianism (Muñoz, 2009 is a notable exception).

Anti-utopianism, then, is subtly distinct from post-utopianism. It is the attempt—through argument or force—to prevent alternatives from taking root and challenging the status quo. Post-utopianism, meanwhile, is the denial that any such utopianism is even an option. There is no need for anti-utopianism if there are no utopians seeking to create alternative organizations of space and time. It is thus an ideational position that is only possible at particular historical moments: it is what anti-utopianism becomes at its moment of triumph. It can, of course, never operate fully independently from anti-utopianism: alternatives stubbornly refuse to be stamped out and so anti-utopian adages and fists must be kept on permanent standby, ready for deployment wherever even the mildest challenge to the status quo is raised.

In disavowing its own utopianism, post-utopianism also sees a shift away from the banal 'happiness' that Žižek associates with the end of history. For Mark Fisher (2009b), the post-utopian condition is one where people know that the current sociopolitical-economic system isn't working but find themselves utterly unable to conceive of an alternative. Similarly, Jeremy Gilbert has written of the social body's relation to neoliberalism (the dominant, if threatened, ideology, of our present era) as one of 'disaffected consent'—an 'acquiescence' to an order we are not satisfied with but which persists because of consumerism's ability to capture needs and desires; a perceived lack of viable alternatives; and exhaustion at trying to survive in the face of ever-increasing precarity (Gilbert, 2015; cf. Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014; Bhattacharyya, 2015). Indeed, even those often understood as uncritical celebrants of the post-utopian acknowledge its inherent melancholy. For Francis Fukuyama, '[t]he end of history will be a very sad event' in which

> [t]he struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands. In the post-historical period there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history.
>
> (1989: 18)

Given this, it may well be that the old adage 'there is no alternative' becomes a sort of fatalistic hyperstition (a claim that creates its own truth through its enunciation) rather than cause for triumphalism; and is a product of embodied exhaustion as much as conscious attachment to the present. Desperate to

massage this exhausted disaffection so that it at least remains 'consensual,' governments and corporations invest millions in affective technologies that William Davies terms 'the happiness industry,' a series of mechanisms designed to engineer, measure and profit from 'happiness' (Davies, 2015; Belli, 2016).

This 'happiness,' as New Labour policy adviser and co-editor of the 2012 World Happiness Report Richard Layard argues, must result from 'our inner attitudes as much as our outward circumstances' (quoted in Gearty, 2006: 54). Others go further: Kennon M. Sheldon and Sonja Lyubomirsky (2009) argue that 'sustainable' happiness is brought about through changes to actions, not circumstances. Even (or rather *particularly*) when recession reveals the fundamental crises of capitalism, the onus is on us to remain positive: unemployment 'is really a "symptom" of some broader personal malaise'; the 'solution' to which consists, in a number of countries, of compulsory Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for benefit claimants and a range of ludicrous self-help courses ostensibly designed to encourage the unemployed to approach their lives more positively (Davies, 2015: 110–111). As with other forms of control, these 'biopedagogies' are, of course, targeted at and operate disproportionately on the unemployed and poor; and on other marginalized bodies: the fat, the disabled, people of colour, queers, migrants and women (Ahmed, 2010; Chandler & Rice, 2013). 'Positive affect' is utilized as 'coercive strategy,' to paraphrase the title of a widely reported paper by Lynne Friedli and Robert Stearn (2015)—producing a 'happiness utopia' (Davies, being sarcastic, 2015: 241); or a 'happiness dystopia' (Ahmed, being normative, 2010: 163), with the threat of state-sanctioned violence (fines, eviction, police harassment, imprisonment) for those who resist. The violence of anti-utopianism lurks in the shadows of post-utopian 'consensus'.

We: A Dystopia of Discipline

OneState's Anti-Utopian Utopianism

The idea of a dystopia or utopia in which happiness is opposed to freedom is certainly not new: Sara Ahmed references Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, whilst George Orwell points out that mankind's existence in the Garden of Eden was reproduced by the circulation of the former and the exclusion of the latter (until the fall, of course). He makes this point in a review of *We* in order to draw attention to Zamyatin's borrowings from the Book of Genesis (Orwell, 1946), and it is back to the world of Zamyatin's novel that I now return: a world organized around 'nonfreedom, which is to say . . . happiness' (Zamyatin, 1993: 61). This, perhaps, is the archetypal (literary) happiness dystopia.

We is often read as an anti-utopian text: a warning *against* the kinds of collective, revolutionary change that led up to the establishment of OneState; and a celebration of individual freedom over the collective power that supposedly opposes it (Gimpelvich, 1997; Saint-Andre, 2003 Riggenbach, 2010; Self in Parrinder, 1977; Suvin, 2003; Zamyatin, 2007). Indeed, there is much in *We* to support such a reading (Suvin's reading is the most sophisticated of such interpretations); and Zamyatin's essays also display a fetishization of the 'heroic,' (male) individual as the key

revolutionary agent (Zamyatin, 1991). Yet there is also much in the narrative that undercuts such a reading, and whilst *We*—like the Mephi—never quite details a utopianism, it is very clearly opposed to anti-utopianism. It is, in other words, an anti-anti-utopian text: its refusal to commit to a utopianism stemming not from any anti-utopianism but from a sensitivity to the potential imbrication of utopianism and anti-utopianism, with dystopia the result. Thus, we functions as a critique not just of Soviet Russia (and industrial society more broadly), but has much that is pertinent for an analysis of our present. Re-reading it through Michel Foucault's work on the relationship between the individual subject and 'disciplinary' forms of power, meanwhile, troubles the assertion that dystopias simply give 'realistic' expression to utopianism's privileging of the collective over the individual.

We takes the form of D-503's diary, allowing the reader to trace his transition from devoted citizen of OneState to membership of the Mephi resistance movement and then—having been forced to undergo an operation to remove his imagination (and much of his memory)—back to obedience. It concludes with his delight at the execution of his former Mephi comrade and lover I-330 (Eve to his Adam), whom he no longer recognizes as a result of his operation. Prior to the first of these transitions and following the second, OneState is filtered to the reader through his awe: 'The Great Benefactor' (its leader), its instruments of torture, the 'Green Wall' (its glass border, keeping out the unruly, 'natural' world) and the 'Guardians' (its secret police) are held to 'represent good, all that is sublime, noble, elevated, crystal pure' (1993: 61). Indeed, so devoted to OneState is D-503 that he states '[n]othing need happen' (1993: 4). A few rebels apart, his world has achieved the 'mathematically perfect life'; a 'system of scientific ethics . . . based on subtraction, addition, division and multiplication' (1993: 14). This system has the aim of 'hardening and crystallizing life' and is close to an 'ideal . . . state of affairs where nothing ever happens anymore' (1993: 25). OneState is presented as the end of history: it is 'unalterable and everlasting,' the *telos* to which humanity has, 'red and sweating, kicking and panting,' been building for centuries' (1993: 111). OneState, then, is a world in which utopianism functions as anti-utopianism and post-utopianism: the celebration of the Good place functioning as a refusal to contemplate the possibility of change: 'we have nowhere to fly to, we've already flown there, we've already found it,' as D-503 records the Guardian S stating (1993: 88). Where this 'common sense' fails, the violence of the state is used to 'correct' or execute subjects who do seek to 'fly' somewhere. Here, then, we find the imbrication of anti-utopianism and utopianism: a thoroughly dystopian state of affairs.

Disciplinary Power in OneState

I-330 is tortured and executed because she refuses to accept this state of affairs, revealing the violence of OneState's utopian anti-utopianism. D-503 is made to watch this and recalls it in his diary:

> That same evening, at one and the same table with Him, the Benefactor, I was sitting (for the first time) in the famous Gas Room. They brought

in that woman. She was supposed to give her testimony in my presence. The woman was stubbornly silent and kept smiling. I noticed that she had sharp, very white teeth, and that this was beautiful.

Then they put her under the Bell. Her face got very white, and since she had eyes that were dark and big, this was very beautiful. When they started pumping the air out of the Bell, she threw her head back, and half closed her eyes and pressed her lips together, and this reminded me of something. She was looking at me, holding on tight to the arms of the chair, until her eyes closed completely. Then they pulled her out, quickly brought her to with the help of electrodes, and put her back under the Bell. This happened three times, and she still didn't say a word.

(1993: 224–225)

Key here is the Benefactor's role: this is not just punishment, but punishment as the spectacular display of sovereign power. Yet this is not typical of the manner in which power works in OneState: it is generally much more dispersed throughout the social body, functioning as an example of what Michel Foucault terms 'disciplinary power': a combination of techniques of surveillance, ordering and punishment—the organization of time and space—that operate in discrete spaces throughout society, both 'state' and 'private' (schools, factories, military barracks) to reproduce the 'docile bodies' required for industrial production; and which operate all the more efficiently for its dispersal.

Here it is important to note that OneState is an inductive extrapolation: a scaling up and forwards of models of discipline initially developed in discrete institutional spaces (Foucault, 2004: 27). It functions as a giant corporation seeking to maximize the (social re)productivity of its employee-citizens—what Tony Cliff would later theorize as 'state capitalism' (Cliff, 1974). Yet as Edward Brown notes, *We*'s target is broader than the Soviet Union (which Cliff had in mind): it 'is not directed against any particular version of the modern mass society . . . not . . . at socialism or Communism as such but rather at forms of regimentation which has resulted from the growth of a huge and complex industrial civilization' (1982: 53; cf. C. Brown in Zamyatin, 1993: xix). Zamyatin undoubtedly experienced such 'regimentation' in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia, but also during his time living in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England, where he supervised the construction of Russian naval ships (Myers, 1990a, 1993); and it has been suggested that Sir Andrew Noble, the chairman of the armaments manufacturers Armstrong Whitworth, may be a model for the Great Benefactor at least as much as Lenin (Myers, 1990b). We should not be so quick to associate dystopia with communism.

The 'time and motion' principles of Frederick Winslow Taylor's 'scientific management' theory (1911) are of considerable relevance here, having been implemented in pre- and post-revolutionary Russia (Lenin, 1919) and in the Tyne shipyards; and being repeatedly referenced in *We*: it is they that constitute OneState's 'scientific ethics' (Rhodes, 1976). A 'hylomorphic' approach to discipline, Taylorism understands the bodies of workers as capable only of

chaos or inertia and so, to maximize efficiency, believes it necessary to impose form on them through regulation of their movements throughout the working day and across 'all social activities' (Taylor, 1911: 8). In this, it creates a 'rhythmics of time' that engenders discipline (Foucault, 1977: 50), allowing the efficient manipulation of the worker's labour power. (Interestingly, Davies refers to contemporary uses of 'happiness' as the 'discrete return of Taylorism' [2015: 136].)

This aspiration is pushed to its logical conclusion as a means for producing place in OneState such that every aspect of life functions as labour in the service of OneState. Years are marked 'AT' ('After Taylor') and Taylorist bureaucracy is raised to a form of aesthetic totalitarianism (Zamyatin thus prefiguring Stalinism) (Jameson, 2005: 202). D-503 describes Taylor as *'the* genius of antiquity' and wonders how the 'ancients' could have written so much on 'someone like Kant' whilst ignoring Taylor's work (Zamyatin, 1993: 34, emphasis in original). He also claims that 'the greatest of all monuments of ancient literature that has come down to us [is] the *Railroad Timetable*. . . . [W]ho doesn't catch his breath when he ruffles through [its] pages?' (1993: 12–13, emphasis in original). OneState is (re)produced by a particularly extreme Taylorism revolving around a timetable that details precisely where people must be and what they must be doing for any given hour of the day, with the exception of the 'personal hours' (one each morning and evening) in which movement is not prescribed. Even sexual activity is timetabled, although we are given no account of domestic labour beyond the fact that children are raised by OneState.[5]

The Individual, Power and Subjection

For Foucault, discipline is enforced through a technique he refers to as 'panopticism,' in which power is bound up with the gaze. He takes Jeremy Bentham's design for a prison—the Panopticon—as the model for the disciplinary society, in which life is 'immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies . . . the utopia of the perfectly governed city' (1977: 198). With cells occupied only by one inmate (an enforced individualization) and through particular arrangements of light, transparency and opacity it becomes possible for a single guard to observe any given prisoner at any given time, ideally ensuring that prisoners behave *as if* they are being watched regardless of whether they are (indeed, Foucault notes that there may be no guard on duty at all: the prisoners would not know) (1977: 75–78). The ubiquity of 'Guardians' in the general population of OneState plays a similar role, with numbers habitually having to self-regulate their behaviour. Yet it is OneState's architecture and urban design that perhaps play the key role here, with 'the sparkling glass of the sidewalks, the divine parallelepipeds of the transparent dwellings' enabling citizens to 'see everything' (Zamyatin, 1993: 7). As Michael D. Amey notes, then, OneState 'uses *everyone* to regulate and modify the behavior of everyone' (2005: 6, emphasis in original): an intensification of panopticism as suggested by Bentham and Foucault, in whose versions

power is less dispersed (there being comparably few observers). These transparent dwellings have rooms for individual citizens, who are only allowed to use their blinds when sexual intercourse is timetabled (they must obtain a 'pink ticket': a 'pass to use the blinds'), meaning they 'live in broad daylight inside these walls that seem to have been fashioned out of bright air, always on view.' D-503 does not consider this a problem, however, for 'We have nothing to hide from one another' (1993: 19). Here we can see as clearly as if we were among the glass skyscrapers ourselves: D-503 is not simply the subject of power but, as a citizen of OneState, the means through which that power is (re)produced.

Whilst the anti-imagination operation D-503 is subject to towards the end of *We* might be read as a fairly literal form of 'brainwashing,' the happiness he expresses at being a part of OneState in the passages quoted above cannot be understood in such simplistic terms: this is not simply the imposition of power on and over the individual. Rather, drawing further on Foucault, it can be said that D-503, as an individual, has been produced *through* the exercise of this disciplinary power. A glimpse of this can be seen in the manner in which D-503 positions himself as part of this hardworking mass in the following extract:

> We get up, millions of us, as though we were one. At the very same hour, millions of us as one, we start work. Later, millions as one, we stop. And then, like one body with a million hands, at one and the same second according to the Table, we lift the spoon to our lips. And at one and the same second we leave for a stroll and go to the auditorium, to the hall for the Taylor exercises, and then to bed.
>
> (Zamyatin, 1993: 13)

The reference to (presumably compulsory) exercise brings to mind Foucault's observation that exercise 'does not culminate in a beyond, but tends towards a subjection that has never reached its limit' (Foucault, 1977: 162). Distinct from 'subjugation,' this 'subjection' constitutes a process through which the individual's 'sense' of identity comes into being: the 'subject' is not autonomous, but is always 'subject to' (Foucault, 1982: 781). 'Discipline "makes" individuals,' writes Foucault. It is 'the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (1977: 170). Or, as Judith Butler puts it, the subject 'deriv[es] its agency from precisely the power [it is so often thought to] oppose' (Butler, 1997: 23). To posit the 'individual' as a figure of resistance to an oppressive utopia is to fail to recognize this.

Subjectivity and Resistance in We

Indeed, it is not the (re)discovery of an innate individuality that D-503 resists, but rather his very disintegration as an individual and his involvement with the (collective) Mephi: two features that mean *We* can be read as an early, tentative exploration of utopian theories of individual and collective identity that would later be explored by autonomists and post-structuralists drawing on the work

of Spinoza and Nietzsche (the influence of Nietzsche is the common thread here: see Rooney, 1986; Burns, 2000). D-503 writes of this disintegration in considerable detail through his diary entries, which tell of his 'strange condition . . . you wake up at night, open your eyes on the darkness, and suddenly feel—you're lost, and you start groping around as fast as you can, looking for something familiar and solid . . .' (Zamyatin, 1993: 143, ellipsis in original). He perceives of himself as transparent and talks of being accompanied by '"him", the other me' (Zamyatin, 1993: 63). This 'other' D-503 is an irrational being whose 'shell burst open, and . . . [whose] pieces were just about to fly in all directions . . . and then what?' (Zamyatin, 1993: 56).

This division of the supposedly indivisible *in*dividual is furthered by D-503's obsession with the square root of minus one, an imaginary number which does not 'exist' (it does not correlate to a natural number) and yet solves important mathematical problems. This is particularly symbolic given the naming system in OneState, but also suggests that a mundane empiricism is insufficient, both politically (it supports the status quo) and empirically (it cannot account for creation and change). Rather, it points to a 'superior empiricism' that accounts for the virtual realm: that which is 'real but not actual' (Deleuze, after Proust, 1991: 30, 96; cf. Deleuze in Deleuze & Parnet, 2007: vii).

D-503's 'breakdown' is also marked by his irritation at the imposition of the natural world, which disrupts the 'purity' of OneState:

> From beyond the Green Wall, from the wild, invisible plains, the wind brings yellow honey pollen of some unknown flowers. The sweet pollen dries your lips, and every minute you pass your tongue over them. The lips of all the women you see must be sweet (of the men, too, of course). This interferes to some extent with the flow of logical thought.
>
> (Zamyatin, 1993: 12)

The gendering is interesting here: initially, D-503 associates the uncivilized wildness with the feminine, bringing to mind Machiavelli's portrayal of Fortuna as a feminized wildness that threatens the masculine order of the city state (Machiavelli, 1998: 98–101); and of course OneState reproduces the misogyny at the heart of the Book of Genesis (and the Western political tradition) by seeing I-330's femininity as the root of all evil and thus in need of particular punishment. Yet it is also interesting how D-503 checks himself with these ellipses, implicitly hinting at a queer desire that might pose a similar threat to OneState, although this does not resurface in his remaining diary entries.

The 'beyond' is not only gendered, but is also racialized (a racialization that is itself gendered): D-503 can barely bring himself to refer to those who live there as people, and notes that they are:

> covered with short, glossy fur, like the fur that can be seen by anyone on the stuffed horse in the Prehistoric Museum. But the females had faces exactly like those of our women: delicately rosy and free of hair, as were

also their breasts—large, firm, of splendid geometric form. The males had only parts of their faces hairless—like our ancestors.

This hair functions as the main racial signifier in the world of OneState. 'Ancestors' are repeatedly referred to as 'hairy,' whilst D-503 obsesses over his hairy hands. 'I detest to have anyone look at [them]: all hairy, shaggy—a stupid atavism. . . . An ape's hands.' He fixates on this as his breakdown and uncertainty develop, noting that the 'other' him has 'hairy fists' (1993: 56, 63).

D-503 also becomes increasingly involved with the Mephi as this breakdown develops, further suggesting that our sense of self is not the result of an innate, essential identity but is produced through our encounters—our intraactions—with others; and that it is through collective action that a change to the status quo might be brought about. Indeed, Zamyatin was an enthusiastic supporter of the October Revolution before becoming disillusioned with the ossification of the Soviet Union shortly afterwards (reflected in I-330's belief that the founding of OneState constituted a great revolutionary event, only to have been betrayed by those in charge; a disillusionment we can also identify in Kabakov's Man).

We's *Anti-Anti-Utopianism*

We, then, is not quite the straightforward text it is often presented as, and should not be read as an indictment of communism or utopianism *per se*. Nor can it be seen as a straightforward endorsement of the individual. Yet it struggles to express its utopianism: although the novel ends with a glimmer of hope as D-503 tells of continued revolutionary fervor in OneState, at no point are we given any indication of the kind of world that the Mephi are fighting for. Do they want to capture the state or overthrow it? Do they have a blueprint for The Good based around clear principles, as OneState's founders did? Or is their utopianism prefigurative? Do they develop 'good' forms of organization in the here-and-now (both within OneState and beyond the Green Wall), and proceed from these? What, exactly, does the 'good' do here, and what kind of place might they create? What role does the 'no' of utopia's etymology and their hostility to established values play in their struggle? Do they undertake the kind of auto-critique that OneState does not? How do the Mephi beyond the Green Wall live? What are their forms of political organization, their cosmologies, their hopes? How do they relate to those within OneState? Do they seek the return of lands that OneState has occupied?

We might not provide answers to such questions, but its anti-anti-utopianism does gesture towards a utopianism. OneState's world of 'happiness' is cracked open by those who organize around their unhappiness, and for their freedom: the Mephi. For George Orwell and Stanley Diamond, they give expression to Zamyatin's primitivist sympathies (Orwell, 1946; Diamond, 1974: 208–209), although the fact they seize control of rather than destroy the INTEGRAL undercuts such a reading somewhat. For others, it is in the dialectical

synthesis of the Mephi's primitivism and OneState's modernity in the child that D-503 fathers with his OneState assigned sexual partner O-90 that provides the locus of hope. Still unborn at the novel's close, the reader learns that O-90 has travelled beyond the Green Wall to give birth to it among the Mephi there, a move 'at once the supplement of the finite ideational world of OneState and the utopian emblem of the continued presence of the worldness of the future [which] forestalls the grim closure suggested at the narrative's end' (Wegner, 2002: 171). Though this synthesis-as-child is a more appealing thought than any crude primitivism, it rather elides the very real tensions between modernity and Indigeneity, which I discuss in Chapter Four. It also displaces utopianism to the future through the figure of the unborn child, a reproductive futurism that I critique in the following chapter.

Indeed, one cannot help but feel that Indigeneity and femininity are being harnessed as fuel for rather than as an equal partner of modernity in Zamyatin's work, for although he celebrates them as forms that oppose the tyranny of disciplinary stasis, they are never explored in anything other than idealized caricature. Thus, rather than functioning as utopian forms in their own right, they provide resources for true, 'heretical' vanguardists—those Nietzschean subjects unafraid to embrace the unknowable future—who, if his essays are anything to go by, generally happen to be white men not unlike Zamyatin himself (albeit that D-503 fails to become such an Übermensch in the face of OneState's discipline). A utopianism that takes feminism and Indigeneity seriously must avoid such a move, neither reducing them to noble savagery nor positioning them as resources for privileged subjects to construct their politics around.

We, then, provides a quite brilliant account of how a triumphant utopianism ossifies into an anti-utopianism that is thoroughly dystopian. Yet far from reminding us that we must not seek to go beyond our status quo, it can be read as an estranging critique of our status quo, whilst providing tentative answers about how this status quo might be challenged. Although many of these are problematic, they suggest the possibility of a utopianism that rejects individualism, hierarchical collectivism, finality, colonialism and patriarchy; and works through (and with) the potentials of communism, feminism, indigeneity, ecology and queerness. It is this task that much of this book takes up.

Code 46: A Dystopia of Control

From Discipline to Control

Whilst *We* still has much to offer our thinking about the nature of power; subjectivity; and the relationship between the utopian, dystopian and anti-utopian, it is important to engage with shifts in these operations since it was written almost a century ago. Here I want to do so by thinking through the supplementation[6] of sovereign and disciplinary power with what Gilles Deleuze (1992) and Bernard Stiegler (2012) have referred to as 'control,' in which new

technologies make new forms of surveillance and subjection possible. In this epoch, those desires that operate beyond that which 'exists' in a narrowly empirical sense—and which make belief and hope possible—come to be 'calculated' and wedded to the mundane drives of existence (Stiegler, 2013: 67): a repetition of the same that creates disaffection and, ultimately, threatens to collapse control altogether (a prospect I return to at the end of this chapter).

This requires us to rethink the nature of contemporary dystopia, in which the relationship between the bad and place is not so clear cut. The 'vast spaces of enclosure' produced by discipline—OneState and the 'discrete' sites of discipline on which it draws—are now in 'crisis' (Deleuze, 1992: 3–4): people do not want to be 'kept in place' anymore, and power functions instead through the modulation of people's movements through space, which have the potential to be 'equal to the harshest of confinements' (Deleuze, 1992: 4); or even 'worse that merely being under someone's command' (Stiegler, 2012: 11). The Mephi and the Man's dream has become a nightmare.

The operation of control as the locus of dystopia is explored in the film *Code 46*, set in a near-future in which climate change has resulted in the desertification of much of Earth's surface and where cloning is widespread. Like *We*, the film employs the (by now rather tired) Edenic-dystopian trope of a male figure with a degree of attachment to the dystopian society (William Geld, played by Tim Robbins) being estranged from it by a woman (Maria Gonzalez, played by Samantha Morton), who, in contrast to I-330's fervent faith in revolution, functions as a lonely 'depressive pixie nightmare girl': she is alienated from the society in which she lives but has little hope for going beyond it. It is worth noting, however, that despite his wealth and seemingly happy family life, William's 'attachment' takes the form of a weary, jetlagged disaffection, making for a stark contrast with D-503's enthusiastic embrace of OneState. This, then, is the world of the post-utopian, in which exhaustion and technologies of control seemingly remove the utopian from public life, either as a 'happy' faith in the world-as-is or as hope for a world that could be.

William works as an insurance fraud investigator, and in the film's opening we see him travelling by plane from his home in Seattle to Shanghai to investigate the production and distribution of fraudulent 'papelles': documents that provide health insurance cover and allow their holder to travel to particular places. With senses sharpened by an 'empathy virus' that affords him near telepathic skills, he quickly realizes that Maria is responsible but, falling in love with her as a result of this virus, gives her employers—the Sphinx Corporation, who manufacture and distribute papelles—the name of another worker.

Where *We* posits the Taylorist industrial workplace as a capillary model for the dystopian state, the dystopia that *Code 46* is set in is organized around the model of the post-industrial corporation, echoing Deleuze's claim that 'the [post-Fordist, post-Taylorist] corporation replaces the factory' as a model for social control (Deleuze, 1992: 5).[7] Yet this is not just the state drawing on modes of organization developed in specific societal institutions, but an

overlap between the corporation and the state: The Sphinx also plays a key role in global governance, just as the governance of security is today blurred between corporations and the state. Its name is carefully chosen too, functioning as:

> a symbol for a post-human concept of individual identity as a bricolage of structural elements at the molecular level as well as a symbol for the . . . cultural hybridity of advanced corporate capitalism, which attempts to assimilate everything indiscriminately. It is also an appropriate symbol for power since it is impossible and evanescent, an image existing in the imagination rather than a real entity, concrete, physical and locatable.
>
> (Bennett, 2013: 69)

Whilst cloning and manufactured viruses are perhaps the film's most obvious science-fictional tropes, it is the papelles that provide the key to understanding control in the world of *Code 46*. Unlike the timetables and Green Wall of OneState, which function as 'molds, distinct casings' that enclose subjects and produce them as individuals, they—and the technologies they interact with—do not determine where subjects must be and when, but rather function as 'modulation[s], like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other' (Deleuze, 1992: 4). They 'allow' their holders to inhabit a particular area and, if they are deemed healthy enough, to travel to other regions. Whilst they might be understood as technologies that enable movement, they can just as easily prevent it, functioning a little like the 'electronic card' that Deleuze (drawing on Guattari) imagines when he writes of

> a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighbourhood, thanks to one's electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position—licit or illicit—and effects a universal modulation.
>
> (1992: 7)

Enhancing panopticism's real-time surveillance, this 'superpanopticism' (Simon, 2005) draws on 'data' (the collection of which creates enormous profits for capital) to predict the behaviour of subjects, 'producing a data body that may well show up before an actual body' (Puar, in Puar & West, 2014).

One such data body appears in *Code 46*, preventing a biologist called Damian from travelling to India to study bats because his DNA—his biological data—reveals to The Sphinx that he is genetically susceptible to a disease specific to the area he wishes to travel to. Code 'is a password' (Deleuze, 1992: 5), but Damian's does not give him entry to this particular area. In one sense The Sphinx is proved correct—Maria gives him a fraudulent papelle and later learns that he dies from this disease—but this desire to 'protect' Damian's

body through limiting his movement can be scaled up to the 'protection' of the social body, where the desire to make the human body 'transparent' through genetic code 'contains traces of the desires motivating the mapping of modern urban architectures to regulate subjects through optimum visibility' (Stacey, quoted in Baker, 2015: 116): an intensification of the transparent panopticism central to OneState's functioning. Brian Baker expands on this by thinking through the intra-section of temporality and spatiality at play, such that '[n]ot only is there a "spatial isolation of temporality" . . . but also time (as the future) is itself collapsed onto a system of total visibility and control of the present (the body) through control of bodies in (present) space . . . physical constraints on mobility . . . are, in a sense, attempts to forestall a problematic future' (2015: 116). This near-absolute control means that explicit anti-utopianism is largely redundant: utopianism is both unthinkable and undoable. This is the post-utopian.

This is not to say that violence is a thing of the past, of course: the promise of mobility is revealed to be only a partial truth, for those without papelles cannot travel; whilst those who cannot obtain any cover whatsoever—or who are stripped of their cover for violating 'codes'—are exiled 'outside': a space beyond the global network of anonymous, multicultural global cities covered by papelles, becoming 'outsiders' (or *afuera*, to use the Spanish term utilized in the film).[8] Here, control is supplemented by (and is perhaps ultimately dependent upon) far older forms of sovereign power, and there are echoes of More's *Utopia*, in which those who break its strict moral and legal codes are stripped of their citizenship. *Code 46* presents us with a thoroughly biopolitical—or perhaps even 'necropolitical'—dystopia, in which the corporation-state has the power to 'make live' and 'let die' through the regulation of healthcare and, ultimately, the threat of exile to a stateless existence of 'bare life' in which people do not 'live' but 'exist,' as William's taxi driver notes of *afuera* on the way from the airport to Shanghai. This is an exclusion fundamental to Western domination—whether sovereign, disciplinary or controlling (Agamben, 1998; Mbembe, 2003; Baker, 2015).

Whilst panoptic discipline (quite literally) required a top-down form of surveillance, the data collection so important for control is frequently more bottom-up: information is gleaned from personal, mobile and locative technologies that subjects engage with every day (the papelle, for example). Drew Hemment draws on this to talk of a 'locative dystopia' (2004), whilst in 2012 the British satirical website *The Daily Mash* ran an article entitled 'Britain Officially a Dystopia,' which suggested that the 'arrival of televisions that can spy on you means Britain is now a fully-qualified dystopia' (2012: the dailymash.co.uk). Yet this dystopianism differs from disciplinary models of panoptic surveillance—which operate through the widespread, constant (and reinforced) knowledge that any given action may be being observed—for the existence of control technologies is not widely advertised. Thus, '[r]ather than being spurned to paranoia, we are encouraged not to worry because we aren't doing anything wrong, while at the same time asked for confidence and

endorsement of the idea that those who are breaking the rules *will* be caught.' (Crain, 2013) Again, we can see a premonition of this through D-503's reaction to surveillance in *We*.

Control and Identity

The world of *Code 46* is initially presented as 'post-racial,' with its inhabitants speaking a mix of English, Mandarin, Spanish, Urdu, Basque, French, Arabic and Italian regardless of where in the world they are (although English dominates: simultaneously an illustration of the persistence of postcolonial power in the film's world and a concession to the film's postcolonial audience). Yet the film shows that this seeming racelessness (hailed by Fukuyama as part of the end of history) is actually part of a global racial—and racist—division (Higginbotham, 2013): there are clear racialized divisions of labour in zones covered by papelles, whilst almost all of the *afuera* depicted are people of colour. The function of borders, then, is in part analogous to the Green Wall around OneState: they maintain a division between insiders, who uphold a particular order; and racialized outsiders, who threaten to contaminate it. Yet they also function as a limit placed upon those *within* the world, whose ability to traverse borders is determined by their data bodies; and who can be exiled beyond if they are deemed a risk to or surplus to the requirements of the 'inside' world.

This is, of course, a process that (re)produces dominations around identity: the 'we' that Crain suggests is encouraged 'not to worry' is the social body that produces and benefits from the intra-sections of whiteness, class privilege, heteronormativity and masculinity (which strategically includes certain individuals and demands from otherwise excluded and abjected groups) (Puar, 2007; James, 2015). And just as those who threaten the future of OneState are racialized as inferior 'hairy savages,' those who (supposedly) 'break the rules' of control are produced through particular identities that are held to pose a threat to social order. In this sense, control and discipline work to (re)produce and visibilize these identities in order that they may be policed, incorporated or punished (Puar, 2007; Phipps, 2014).[9] These identities are not pre-given but are socially constructed through techniques that make specific differences matter. In OneState, 'hairiness' is such a difference, whilst our contemporary world holds other features to be signifiers of threat: 'stratifying demarcations and taxonomies of being, classifications . . . bent on the siloing of particularity and on the denigrating of any expansive idea of the common and commonism' (Muñoz, 2015: 210). These do not act in isolation but constitute each other (Anguksuar [LaFortune], 1997; Federici, 2004; Amadiume, 2015) and 'intersect' in particular times and spaces (Crenshaw, 1989; Puar, 2007).[10]

Indeed, this 'threat' is also classed and gendered: at the film's end the relatively poor Maria is exiled 'outside' for unknowingly breaking the titular code 46 (which prohibits incest). The sexual partner with whom she commits this violation is William, who is the son of one of her significantly older clones. William knows this at the time of the intercourse but Maria does not, meaning that her consent was given without her being in possession of clearly pertinent

information. Ethically, then, this is an act of rape, although whether it legally constitutes such in the world of *Code 46* is unclear. Just as D-503 escapes the punishment OneState metes out to I-330, the considerably richer William benefits from his various privileges, for he is judged to have been affected by his empathy virus and is permitted to return to his (unconvincing performance of) 'happy' family life in Seattle with his memories of Maria erased. As in our world, women are punished for being victims of sexual violence more harshly than men are for perpetrating it, whilst the threat of being rendered part of the global 'surplus population' hangs over the working class.

Control and Subjection

Control does not just play a role in creating particular identities as a threat to social order but also breaks down the subject into what Deleuze refers to as the 'dividual.' This term emphasizes the manner in which the 'individual'—a discrete unit that supposedly cannot be 'divided' (and so constitutes the base-level building block for the political)—is spatiotemporally fragmented into data. In the control society, (in)dividuals are produced not through their relation to a mass (as they are by discipline), but rather to the banks of data they can be broken down into. This information—taken from the most intimate areas of our lives and bodies—is taken from our grasp and recombined to predict and modulate our behaviour: particular patterns of behaviour and identification flag certain bodies as 'risks' at airports (Amoore & De Goede, 2005); DNA might determine whether a subject is 'truly' Indigenous, regardless of Indigenous critiques of such an approach (Tallbear, 2013); and data taken from our social media habits might determine whether we should be recommended to landlords as suitable tenants (Doctorow, 2016). *Code 46* shows us how such processes of control can be every bit as inhibiting as discipline's more overt operations of power.

Indeed, the post-utopianism of *Code 46* is presented as significantly more totalizing than OneState, for there seems to be no possibility of struggle within, against or beyond the 'inside' world, merely occasional embodiments of disaffection: a weary slump, a sigh, or a pithy observation. Its post-utopianism realizes the very qualities that anti-utopians associate with utopianism, and produce a thoroughly chilling dystopia. As in *We*, an alternative to this is shown in the world beyond its borders (which I critique in Chapter Three), but unlike Zamyatin's text there is no sense of dynamic interplay between the two worlds: the 'inside' world's control of its borders is secure such that the outside can seemingly pose little threat.

The Affective Dystopia

Generic signifiers notwithstanding, there are clear and important differences between the dystopian worlds depicted in *We* and *Code 46*, although just as control should be thought of as supplementary to rather than a replacement for disciplinary and sovereign power, it is not hard to imagine that if OneState survives and changes with technological developments, it may well evolve into something like the 'inside' world of *Code 46*. Here, however, I want to think

about what it means to refer to the worlds depicted in these works as 'dysto-pias': bad places. This helps us move beyond 'common sense' approaches, which hold that dystopias are simply utopias put into practice; and in which the (supposedly) otherwise autonomous 'individual' is denigrated.

The Bad

In his reading of Baruch Spinoza's *Ethics*,[11] Gilles Deleuze notes that there are 'two senses of the variation of the power of acting': its increase, giving us a feeling of joy; and its decrease, producing sadness (1988: 71). The former is a 'good' operation of power, the latter is 'bad,' and might properly be thought of as 'domination' (Gordon, 2008: 50-52). [12] Such evaluations are not made in accordance with ideal moral guidelines (we do not judge an action in accor-dance with a predetermined notion of what is good and bad), nor from a God's eye view, but are felt as affect: it is through experiences of 'joy' or 'sadness' that we can tentatively determine the nature of particular operations of power on the body. The *dys* of dystopia, I contend, comprises 'bad' operations of power. There are two key things that require a bit of unpacking here: what is meant by 'sadness' (and its relation to joy), and what is meant by 'body.'

The 'sadness' through which we experience these bad operations of power must be understood broadly: it may, for example, manifest itself as fear, anxi-ety or emptiness; or as physical pain. It may simply register as 'disaffection.' Yet it is not in a binary opposition with 'joy': domination may bring with it a 'sad joy,' for both the dominating and dominated body (Deleuze & Parnet, 1996). The operation of these 'sad joys' in everyday situations is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'microfascism' (2004: 236), whilst John Protevi shows how it is central to historical, 'macro' fascism through a prescient analysis of the 'joy' felt by the crowd at the Nuremberg Rallies (2009: 50). The 'joy' D-503 feels at being a part of OneState can, in this sense, be understood as a 'sad joy.' This should not simply be understood as the old marxist notion of 'false consciousness': 'sad joys' are important psychic mechanisms that allow the individual to cohere in the face of domination, or to deny the need for a change where the results cannot be guaranteed (which, as I have already argued, can induce anxiety). What this means is that emotional responses do not always 'match up' to changes in our affective capacities in a straightfor-ward way (McManus, 2011), hence the need for any evaluation to be tentative when evaluating any particular operation of power.

The term 'body,' meanwhile, does not refer to the independent subject cen-tral to Western liberalism. Thus, 'bad' operations are not simply those which the individual does not enjoy. Rather, the term 'body' refers to a 'dynamic ensemble of relations . . . defined by its affective capacity' (Thompson & Bid-dle, 2013: 9). It is not a stable, clearly defined, independent form that inter-acts with other forms; but is dynamic, continually undergoing (re)production through its intra-actions with other bodies and being constituted by these intra-actions: a body cannot be abstracted from its temporal becomings. The body

may be that of an individual human, but it is also possible to talk of a 'social body,' a 'student body' or a 'body politic.' Non- and more-than-human actors are also bodies, capable of affecting and being affected.

This understanding of a body destabilizes the individual subject beloved of liberal politics in two ways. The first is that the individual is no longer an independent actor around which a politics can be built, and whose sub-jugation can serve as the determining factor for what is 'bad.' As for Fou-cault and Butler, subjects are produced by the lifeworlds in which they live and move: the material experiences they have, the ideas they are exposed to and the encounters they have. The unique individual emerges from these intra-actions through a permanent process of 'individuation' (Gilbert after Simondon, 2014: 108–109). Secondly—as we have seen—the supposedly indivisible subject can also be divided and so is a dividual at least as much as it is an individual.

'Bad' operations of power, then, are those that produce (rather than sim-ply 'act on') bodies in such a way as to limit their capacity to act (which can itself be understood as power). Both discipline and control work in this manner. As the bodies in question are not independent from one another, but are co-constitutive, a 'bad' operation of power—domination—decreases the capacity of both 'individual' and 'collective' bodies to act. Thus, whilst domi-nation might superficially increase the capacity of the dominating body to act (through the acquisition of wealth, or the thrill of being in charge), it constitutes 'the lowest degree of power': a 'malice' that channels up the flows of power through the social body (Deleuze, quoted in Lambert, 2013: 19); a channelling up that, in turn, reduces the capacity of the dominant body to act (and, to be acted upon)—a point well made in much anarchist theory (Malat-esta, 1891; Bottici, 2013).

It is domination, then, rather than power *per se*, that is opposed to freedom, understood here as a potential for the creation of new forms which emerge from good intra-actions, and which cannot be predicted in advance. Where power can potentially be produced in common: a 'counter-power' (Foucault, 1977) or a 'power-with' that distributatively and intensively multiplies as it moves throughout the social body ('good' operations, which I discuss in Chapter Four), domination encloses it—locking it into particular relations and fostering the kind of stasis seen in OneState, the world of *Code 46* and our own 'end of history.' In this sense, domination is parasitic on the power immanent to the social form rather than simply operating from the top down.[13] This 'capture' or 'reterritorialization' occurs at all levels, from the nano- to the macropolitical; and operates across the social, political and economic terrains—Frédéric Lordon refers to it as 'bossing,' giving the examples of the senior colleague who takes the credit for a junior colleague's work and the military commander who persuades those below him that it is in their interest to risk their lives (2014: 13–14) We might think here of the Great Benefactor-as-boss and of the control society's manipulation of techniques of what might be called 'self-bossing.'

Whilst domination may be bad for the social body as a collective, it does not equally affect different subjects (remembering, of course, that to affect is also to produce). Iris Marion Young writes:

> We [as women] often experience our bodies as a fragile encumbrance, rather than the media for the enactment of our aims. We feel as though we must have our attention directed upon our bodies to make sure they are doing what we wish them to do, rather than paying attention to what we want do through our bodies.
>
> (2004: 214)

Here, the category 'woman' can be expanded (and perhaps renamed) to apply not just to cissexual women, but to all those living under patriarchy whose bodies do not conform to masculine norms.[14] For Young, this denial of the body's affective capacities means that the gender-oppressed body is partly relegated to the status of the 'thing' (2004: 215), a term that names the negation of the affective body: a body that cannot act and can only be acted upon in ways that further prevent its action. For Aimé Césaire, the reduction of the body to a thing is central to colonization, through which colonized bodies are commodified (reduced to the creation of value for the colonizer and thus separated from what they might do) (2000: 42). In other contexts, 'thing' might be used as a term of disgust in order to (de)name a body that does not fit into pre-existing regimes of classification and thus 'pollutes' the social sphere: a process that Julia Kristeva refers to as 'abjection' (1982) and which has been used to theorize the construction and domination of working class, immigrant, black, brown, disabled, fat, queer, female and gender non-conforming bodies (Shimakawa, 2002; Shildrick, 2005; Tyler, 2013; Phillips, 2014).

Bad-Place

If domination understood as described above constitutes the 'bad' of dystopia, what—or where—is the place of dystopia? I have already suggested that there is a tendency in particular strains of anti-anti-utopianism to see place itself as dystopian: a necessarily static form that places a limit on affective capacities and an agent of domination in and of itself. Indeed, in Chapter Three I show how this anti-anti-utopianism can be found in particular approaches in utopian studies that reject utopia, or see it as a state of becoming rather than as a place. There is much that is attractive to such an understanding; and it is clearly of particular utility to those for whom place plays a key role in domination, as it does in strictly Taylorist societies of discipline such as OneState (on a more localized level we might think of Arthur Seaton's rejection of the oppressive work*place* in favour of nihilistic hedonism in Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* [2008]).

It is through this disciplinary power that place becomes a form through which domination is organized. It 'functions as a closed terrain of social control that

becomes extremely hard to break (or break out of) once it achieves its particular permanence' (Harvey, 1996: 312). Keeping bodies in their place keeps the system in its place. The *dys* and *topia* seem inseparable, and it is perhaps not surprising that Zamyatin, the Mephi and Kabakov's Man dream of escape into formless space. Yet it is also important here to pay attention to temporality: these places don't simply exist as fully formed technologies of domination, but are made so through the repetition of sameness: day in, day out, bodies do the same things at the same time. Place is never pre-given but is always produced, and this opens up the possibility of producing good places (and, indeed, no-good places) as a form of radical praxis, rather than fleeing from it altogether.

In stark contrast to OneState, domination in the 'inside' world of *Code 46* seems to float free from place, creating a 'placeless power' that is contrasted by the 'powerless places' (Castells & Henderson, 1987: 7) on the 'outside.' Power operates not through place—which provides a terrain for resistance— but through 'non-place,' a space in which there seems to be nothing for resistance to get its teeth into (Augé, 2009). This placelessness is also ahistorical: where D-503 retains a clear—albeit presumably partial—understanding of how OneState came into existence and continues to function (he writes, for example, of a 200-year war leading to its establishment, which reduced the global population by 99 percent), those inhabiting the inside in *Code 46* seem largely disinterested in such issues. Power seems to escape geography and history, destroying the possibility of 'cognitively mapping' the relationship between history and place (Jameson, 1988).

This strange, placeless *ennui* is described by Stiegler, who states that the 'disaffection' in which subjects no longer 'feel' their intra-actions with the world creates 'withdrawal,' experienced as a loss of place (2012: 7), which is tied also to a loss of a (sense of) futurity. He makes clear that this is an ethical issue, noting that 'as the translation of the Greek word *ethos*, [ethics] is that which gives me my *place* within the *circuit of affects* through which the process of psychic and collective individuation constitutes itself' (2012: 7–8). As control breaks these bonds it loses trust and thus its ability to control, creating—as the title of Stiegler's work has it—'uncontrollable societies of disaffected individuals'; a situation exacerbated by frustrations at racializing and racist spatial divisions and policing. The riots that have flared in major European cities in recent years must be seen as evidence of this (2012: 17, 48, 53), and with Gareth Millington (after Ernst Bloch) we might state that in these there are the preconscious stirrings of a world yet to come (2016: 720; cf. Clover, 2016).

Yet forces of domination might not be so opposed to this uncontrollability as one might think: Stiegler notes that they open the way to more explicit forms of power: a regressive 'system of terror' in which the bourgeoisie can find belief (2012: 68), to be (re)produced through an intensification of the repression that has been practiced on particular bodies throughout societies of discipline and control. Indeed, as James Butler has noted, in the absence of a left-utopianism that can draw from the desires and energies of such riots even 'progressive'

and 'moderate' voices of reason to line up behind alarmingly authoritarian con-demnations and punishments (Butler, 2016). At this point, the world finds itself in desperate need of a utopianism that builds on and (re)produces the affective bonds diminished by control in order to co-produce a sense of place. Yet it finds itself on the verge of a utopianism that mobilizes reactionary affects. We must struggle against its sad joys.

Notes

1. Outside the narrative frame Harry's identification with the nuclear family form can also be critiqued. Whilst this may be perfectly understandable in a world where it is one of the few communal structures available, its role in reproducing private property and heteronormativity, the invisibilization of women's labour and its functioning as a frequent site of abuse (Lehr, 1999) mean that the mirror's reflection of this 'desire' is more a cruel optimism than a viable utopianism.

2. The name 'Deterritorial Support Group' can be read as a subversion of the contemporary overlapping of control and discipline. It is taken from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'deterritorialization'—the (potentially) liberating 'flows' that capital 'reterritorializes' and the Metropolitan Police's notorious Territorial Support Group, known for their brutal policing of protest (which was disbanded in February 2016). For more on DSG, see deterritorialsupportgroup.wordpress.com, their essay 'All the Memes of Production' (2012) or Hancox (2011).

3. It is not only those opposed to the status quo who make the comparison, however. David Steele (an advocate of the free market), notes that '[t]he attempt to abstain from utopianism merely leads to unexamined utopias' (quoted in Hodgson, 1999: 8), whilst Geoffrey M. Hodgson states that contemporary anti-utopianism 'typically admits utopianism through the back door while keeping all eyes to the front' (1999: 8).

4. This is not to say that the intellectual and the popular are necessarily opposed, but that this is how such approaches are positioned (and position themselves).

5. Again, Zamyatin was very likely inspired by his experiences in Newcastle here: his earlier novella *The Islanders* satirizes British middle class obsessions with timetabling and their attitudes to sex through a Vicar and his wife, who timetable every last detail of their lives—right down to sexual intercourse (Zamyatin, 1985). Indeed, the England in which it is set is one of rigid, prosaic discipline: a mundane precursor to OneState's totalitarianism, which brings to mind Foucault's claim that Stalinism 'used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies' (Foucault, 1982: 779).

6. Control is sometimes held to have replaced discipline, but I use the rather more ambiguous 'supplement' deliberately. In certain times and places they work together, in others control seems to be a continuation of discipline and in others there is tension between them. Nor, of course, is sovereign power entirely absent from our world.

7. Hans Pruijt (2003) distinguishes between a Japanese 'neo-Taylorism,' which in our terms remains more wedded to modes of discipline; and a European 'anti-Taylorism,' which places greater emphasis on decentralized control.

8. Similarly impoverished 'outsides' can be found in other recent works of dystopian fiction: notable examples here are 'the glop' in Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass* (*He, She and It* in the USA) (1992) and the 'pleeblands' in Margaret Attwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003). Here, they are clear extrapolations from contemporary informal, illegal and 'temporary' settlements: the shantytowns, slums and camps in which so much of the world's population live.

9. The argument here is that race, sexuality and gender are not innate features of a subject's identity but are produced (in part) through their intra-actions with techniques of discipline and control. To recognize this is not to say, however, that identity cannot play a role in a utopian politics, but rather that identity should be recognized as a contingent production of various intra-active power relations.

10. Puar (2007, 2012) offers a sympathetic criticism of intersectionality as it has been taken up in academia through a reading of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'assemblage.' This, she suggests, avoids a tendency to fix identity and rather allows us to understand it as a process, encounter and event. I engage with this further in Chapter Five.

11. Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza is by no means a straightforward reading, but rather an act of what Deleuze calls 'buggery' (a metaphor both problematic and clumsy)—a process of 'taking an author from behind, and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed' (1995: 6). This is complicated somewhat, however, through the presence of Friedrich Nietzsche ('on'—or perhaps 'through whom'—Deleuze also produced a book—*Nietzsche and Philosophy*): making this *enculage* something of a ménage a trois in which the two thinkers are frequently made to speak t(hr)o(ugh) each other. Indeed, *Spinoza: A Practical Philosophy* opens with the claim that 'Nietzsche understood, having lived it himself, what constitutes the mystery of a philosopher's life' (Deleuze, 1988: 3); and the book's translator Robert Hurley notes that Deleuze creates a 'kinship of Spinoza and Nietzsche' built around a 'historical line' composed of their resonances (Hurley, in Deleuze, 1988: I). Indeed, for Deleuze, Spinoza was a Nietzschean thinker *par excellence*, someone who 'philosophises with hammer blows' (1988: 11). Meanwhile Hugh Tomlinson—the translator of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*—states that, for Deleuze, Spinoza was the 'only . . . predecessor' to Nietzsche aside from the Pre-Socratics (Tomlinson in Deleuze, 1986: ix).

    Making Nietzsche speak through Spinoza may not be too much of a 'monstrosity' in this case, however: in a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck, Nietzsche wrote: 'I am utterly amazed, utterly enchanted! I have a *precursor*, and what a precursor! I hardly knew Spinoza: that I should have turned to him just *now*, was inspired by "instinct." Not only is his overall tendency like mine—namely to make all knowledge the *most powerful affect*—but in five main points of his doctrine I recognize myself; this most unusual and loneliest thinker is closest to me precisely in these matters: he denies the freedom of the will, teleology, the moral world-order, the unegoistic, and evil. Even though the divergencies are admittedly tremendous, they are due more to the difference in time, culture, and science' (1954: 92). These commonalities and divergences have been further discussed by Yovel (1992: 104–135), who contends that Nietzsche overstressed the similarities, and that Spinoza's immanent thought lacked the 'self-overcoming' of Nietzsche's *ubermensch*.

12. My use of 'domination' and power can be read as an attempt to bring to English what both French and Latin have: two words for power—one for productive power and one for dominatory power (*puissance* and *pouvoir* in French, respectively; and *potentia* and *potestas* in Latin, respectively). Deleuze and Spinoza both make use of these terms, as do many philosophers operating on this terrain.

13. Indeed, a number of theorists have suggested that the control society emerged through the capture of socially distributed power that was directed against disciplinary forms of domination. The argument is that having compromised with the working class following the hardships of the Great Depression and World War Two (through increased welfare provision and by ensuring high levels of employment) (Offe, 1984: 147; Solidarity Federation, 2012: 72–77), capital and the state

subsequently turned to a process of incorporating and reversing—rather than meeting halfway—the demands of an increasingly diverse working class. This sees the demands of this 'multitude' absorbed and spat out in distorted form, a process Virno refers to as 'the communism of capital' (which he associates with post-Fordism). He identifies three key 'communist' demands that emerged during the 1960s and 70s that capitalism has adapted in this manner: (1) the demand for the abolition of wage labour and increased free time, which becomes unemployment and precarity; (2) the demand for the dissolution of the state, which becomes the dissolution and privatization of the welfare state and the attendant rise in corporate power; (3) the demand that people are free to create their own identities (through collective power), which becomes a celebration of the individual as distinct from the collective and as produced through the marketplace (Virno, 2004: 110–111).

This is certainly an incomplete list, and to these we might add the demands for increased female participation in the workforce and the erosion of traditional gendered divisions of labour, which has resulted in what is often—rather derisorily—referred to as the 'feminization of labour.' This has seen the commodification of traits historically understood to be female (care and emotion), the gendering of the 'ideal working subject' as female; and increasing burdens on women, who still perform the majority of unpaid labour whilst also being exploited through their jobs (for which they are likely to be paid significantly less than men) (Bhopal & Preston, 2012). Equally disturbing is the manner in feminist and LGBT+ demands have been incorporated into carceral, statist and colonial regimes of policing, subjugation and military invasion (Puar, 2007; Bernstein, 2010). We could also point to how the demands for increased leisure and greater creativity have led to the rise of 'creative labour,' with its attendant precarities and inequalities (Peck, 2005; McLean, 2014). This is a simplified analysis inasmuch as it overlooks the manner in which these 'demands' never come from a 'pure' communist—or otherwise radical—position: they, like any social force arising from our present, are always imbricated with that present, and are sometimes almost entirely complicit with it (they are demands, in other words, for more of the same). The degree to which this is the case varies enormously, however, and each particular instance will require engagement with its specificities.

14. Such an analysis might draw on Young's own understanding of gender as 'seriality' (Young, 1994), although this is designed to expand the concept 'woman,' a term many who experience gender oppression do not identify with.

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2   Rethinking Contemporary Utopianism

Introduction: Utopianism against Post-Utopianism

Utopianism never disappears completely, of course, and this is precisely why post-utopianism must always keep the material violence and popular rhetoric of anti-utopianism on permanent standby. This chapter provides a critical survey of particular forms of utopianism that persist in spite or perhaps because of the post-utopian claim that we inhabit the end of history. It is not an overview, for the field is too large to survey, and is necessarily shaped by my own situatedness, It draws on popular culture and debates from within struggle as much as academic discourse, as these are key terrains for the production and mediation of approaches to the utopian. Many of the forms of utopianism are, I suggest, problematic and, in the first case explored, downright abysmal.

Far-right Utopianism

Whilst utopianism is generally associated with left-wing politics by both its defenders and detractors, it is of vital importance to think through right-wing utopianism, which currently constitutes the most powerful challenge to banal 'happy' visions of the end of history across much of the world.[1] This frequently meets with condemnation (and ridicule) from liberals but despite the vision of a 'Good place' at the heart of its politics is rarely understood as a utopianism (and so critique is not framed as anti-utopian), no doubt because of the manner in which the bogeyman of utopia was so closely associated with the USSR during the Cold War (Jameson, 2005). Yet despite frequently positioning itself against 'liberalism,' my claim here is that it should in fact be understood as an affective intensification of increasingly dominant aspects of liberalism: enclosure, national identity—even, on occasion, 'tolerance'—rather than as a form seeking to go beyond liberalism.[2]

Mobilizing around nostalgic, essentialized, racially exclusive and ahistorical understandings of 'Good place' supposedly under threat from 'others'—people of colour, Jews, feminists, migrants, queers, gender non-conformers, 'cucks' 'lefties'—held to have been empowered by the more liberal ramifications of capitalist liberal democracy (relative freedom of movement, limited reforms around gender and sexuality), such utopianism offers visions of a good life based on

'traditional' values associated with the place in question. It promises to 'Make America Great Again,' as Donald Trump's baseball caps have it; or organizes around that which is—supposedly—'Unspoilt, honest, good,' as Austria's 2016 far-right presidential candidate Norbert Hofer's slogan puts it. (Topolski, 2016)

This (potentially) great, unspoilt, good, honest place over which such utopianism claims possession is usually the nation, although much organization around 'Europe' operates similarly (Schlembach, 2014; Nathan & Topolski, 2016). The 'others' held to oppose this are, as ever, distinguished from it through intra-actions between race, class, gender and health: 'differences' which are often framed as 'cultural incompatibility' in order to disavow their white supremacy. It is held that they should be denied entry, deported, held in detention centres, criminalized and beaten up. This utopianism is deeply affective, organizing itself against the melancholic disaffection and placelessness of the post-utopian by fostering an affective belonging centred on the reactionary understanding of place, which appeals in particular to and helps (re) produce white, masculine identity (Ware, 1996) through a fantasy of control. This, no doubt, is experienced as great joy for many of those able to participate in this structure, but it is a sad joy—a fascist joy incapable of sustaining itself without its reactionary totems and its virulent hatred of the other. This structure of feeling also allows obviously contradictory elements in such ideology to be glossed over: the affective attachment trumps a more analytic mode of decision-making (this can explain, for example, why the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in the 2016 referendum in order to 'take back control,' despite it being abundantly clear that doing so would leave it with far less control).

This utopianism is not, however, entirely distinct from liberalism's end of history, but rather is an amplification and intensification of particular elements inherent to even the most seemingly progressive liberalisms. As Nina Power notes, it builds on liberalism's foundations in enclosure and private property, expressing a 'possessive relation to space . . . as if the land was something that had some kind of central tie to identity, as opposed to something owned and divided by private interests.' (2014) The violence it promises to mete out against non-conforming bodies has been a constant under even 'progressive,' 'centre-left' governments (Fekete, 2001; Schuster, 2005); whilst political parties (again, including those who are supposedly progressive) have repeatedly pandered to the right in search of votes that conform to populist anti-immigration and Islamophobic narratives rather than offering counternarratives of their own, dragging the 'centreground' of political debate ever further to the right (Kallis, 2015; Heinisch & Hauser, 2016: 80–81; Plenel, 2016). Far-right parties, meanwhile, may appropriate aspects of liberalism (French Republicanism, Dutch 'permissiveness') as evidence that white, European society is inherently superior, and in need of protection from those who threaten it (Lentin & Titley, 2011; Herbert, 2013; Plenel, 2016).

This white exceptionalism is also at the heart of liberalism: Ghassan Hage points out that constructions of Australia as a good place are often reproduced

through demonstration of its supposed 'tolerance' of others, a move that allows ongoing racist and colonial violence to be portrayed as an 'evil' aberration from a 'good' tolerant norm. For whilst tolerance is positioned as a 'morally "good" practice,' it is 'structurally similar to the "evil" nationalist practices of exclusion that [it is] supposedly negating. Those who execute them, "Good" as they are, share and inhabit along with White "evil" nationalists the same imaginary position of power within a nation imagined as "theirs" ' (2000: 79; cf. Lentin & Titley, 2011). In other words, the power remains with those who are tolerant (and, of course, are tolerant *only up to a point*: a point that they decide), thus ensuring that White Australians retain their 'possession' over national space (Hage, 2000). This, Hage notes, cannot be separated from Australia's existence as a settler colony. A number of other scholars, meanwhile, have noted the manner in which liberal queers and feminists have enabled liberal states to further carceral and colonial agendas domestically and internationally (Puar, 2007; Power, 2009). Nor, in fact, can radicals entirely be excused here: Raphael Schlembach (2014) notes the use of such exceptionalism in activist claims that 'Another Europe Is Possible' and in the writings of Antonio Negri, who frames his work in a (supposedly) particularly European radical lineage.[3] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, meanwhile, uses the term 'Islamized' as a general label for fascistic forms of joy and identification (2009: 133): a hideous irony given the way that so much contemporary European and American fascism is so explicitly Islamophobic. And of course white exceptionalism is reproduced in less explicit ways in theory and practice: this book, for example, in its (over-)reliance on white European males contributes to such discourse in its own small way: as Sara Ahmed notes, academic citation is a 'reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies' (2013: feministkilljoy.com), and thus excluding others.

Left Utopianisms: Searching for a Beyond

Road to Ruin

For those who oppose capitalism and/or the state, it sometimes seems as if the most powerful social dreams of a qualitatively different world that circulate through our present are those of apocalypse, as if we can only learn to live differently through technological and civilizational collapse (Cunningham, 2011; cf. Duncombe in More, 2012: xix; Miéville, 2015). Such fantasies find expression in a variety of cultural forms (popular music, contemporary artworks, television, computer games, viral media, coffee table photography books, etc.) and whilst some of these are ostensibly designed as Jeremiads, they frequently afford certain subjects a space-time into which fantasies of empowerment can be projected. This is little more than a millenarianism for the privileged: as John Protevi has pointed out, the ability to 'enjoy' such sublimity is premised on being external to the vision, allowing them to avoid the 'hardship, danger and misery that would confront anyone forced to live in

such a place' (Kant, quoted in Protevi, 2009: 79).[4] Disasterbating furiously like smug Noahs, these subjects imagine that they will be among those who triumph as justice is wrought upon those who have created this predicament, Diderot's 'sole survivors of a nation that is no more' (Diderot, quoted in Dubin, 2010: 13; cf. Adams, 2008).[5] Whilst such fantasies may have a compensatory radicalism—cops and bankers disappearing beneath the waves as the ark of the righteous sails on—it hardly needs to be said that the destruction of the world cannot be central to any emancipatory praxis. Those who advocate creating such a change via human agency cannot answer (or are unconcerned by) the fact that such a collapse would result in the deaths of billions (Flood, 2008), whilst the hideous realities of environmental disaster would be (and indeed already are being) borne not by the planet's richest but by its poorest. They *already are* 'forced to live in such a place': we are well into a 'combined and uneven apocalypse' (Williams, 2010).

Post-Utopian Blues

No wonder, then, that it is—apparently—easier to imagine the end of the world than a contemporary leftist text on the possibility of radical change that does not include that paraphrased quote of Jameson's: that it is 'easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.'[6] As I will argue, Jameson's argument is more complicated than it might initially appear here, but it is not wholly unfair to see him as indicative of a particular sub-genre of leftist melancholy that laments the end or debasement of utopia. Russell Jacoby, for example, writes:

> Today, socialists and leftists do not dream of a future qualitatively differ-ent from the present. To put it differently, radicalism no longer believes in itself. Once upon a time leftists acted as if they could fundamentally reorganize society. Intellectually, the belief fed off a utopian vision of a different society; psychologically, it rested on self-confidence about one's place in history; politically, it depended on the real prospects.
>
> (1999: 10)

This is to be regretted not just for the sake of the concept of utopia, but for the good of the left and the world more broadly. Even those who are not utopians, Jacoby suggests, would do well to pay heed to its import. 'Can liberalism with a backbone exist if its left turns mushy?,' he asks. 'Does radicalism persist if reduced to means and methods? Does a left survive if it abandons a utopian hope or plan?' (1999: 25).

Zygmunt Bauman (2005), meanwhile, suggests that the problem with utopia is not that it has withered, but rather that it has switched from being understood as a destination—albeit one that we can never reach—and instead functions as the journey to that destination, which is improvised without any understanding of where we might be going: the position, of course, of the Mephi when they

seize the INTEGRAL. In a further resonance to the plot of *We*, he laments that individuals have been 'fragmented' through consumerism such that no authentic self can be identified. For him, such a programme is doomed to complicity with the self-interested subjectivity demanded by capitalism, in which a lack of vision, planning and comprehension of the bigger picture (including communality) results in a dystopian society of competition and scarcity.

Utopia, in such formulations, should always be figured as elsewhere: on the fringes of what is imaginable or possible, as in Oscar Wilde's famous statement that

> a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.
>
> (1891: marxists.org)

Spatial is here utilized as a metaphor for time, of course (something we will come across again). Such a utopianism is held to have a use value even if it fails: perhaps humanity will not land at utopia, but at least it will have left the old country behind, and progress will have been made. Such progress, however, is thus held to be preferable to a situation in which political culture is no longer oriented to the identification of 'better countries.' We have no horizon. We fly without knowing where.

Yesterday's Tomorrows

Noticeable in the lamentations of thinkers such as Bauman and Jacoby is a quasi-romantic melancholy: a postmodern repetition of early nineteenth century chivalric nostalgia.[7] And whilst the politics may be less overtly conservative than those hoping for a return to a sanitized medievalism, it is not hard to see a similar identification with the past in many leftist responses to the end of history. In these, what is being lamented is not so much the future—but the past when we (supposedly) had a clearer idea of and commitment to the future. A manifestation of this is the cultural phenomena of 'hauntology,' most clearly expressed in music. Both Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds have written enthusiastically about it, hailing it as a form that disrupts linear history to reveal traces of unfinished pasts lurking within—'haunting'—the end of history to create what might be called a 'weak utopianism' (Fisher, 2006; Reynolds, 2006, 2011; cf. Benjamin, 1973, 2002; Derrida, 2006; Sexton, 2012). Whilst Fisher's earlier writings engage with a wide range of artists and appropriated aesthetic forms, hauntology is now largely associated with a group of British bands

> obsessed with the spirit of technocratic utopianism that flourished in the period between the birth of the welfare state and the ascent of Thatcher.

Optimistic and forward-looking, this was the era of new towns and ambitious urban-redevelopment projects (slums torn down and replaced by the ultimately notorious but initially welcomed high-rise tower blocks and housing estates), the age of polytechnics, the Open University (further education made available for all) and the sixties paperback explosion spearheaded by Penguin Books with their blue-spined drive to expand the horizons of the common man.

(Reynolds, 2011: 338)

Though it is not always so straightforwardly utopian in content—much of its subject matter is decidedly uneasy (paranormality, the Cold War, an eerily paternal media[8])—hauntology nonetheless (deliberately) evokes a time in which, supposedly, people believed that a better world was possible, and in which they 'enjoyed' a more pronounced sense of place and historical belonging.

Yet I am not convinced that hauntology reinvigorates a sense that another world is possible so much as fetishize past futurity as a form for aesthetic contemplation: a domestication of modernity also evident in the increasing number of 'crafty' homeware products depicting modernist and brutalist architecture (Jacob, 2013). There is also an overlap with a particular sub-genre of ruins fascination concerned with the ruins in the former Eastern Bloc, manifested in a number of contemporary art projects, websites and coffee table books consisting of representations (usually photographs) of the ruined (or dilapidated) buildings, monuments and technologies of former communist countries (Chaubin, 2011; Ronduda et al., 2011; Herwig, 2015; Tkachenko, 2015). Many of these resurface (often uncredited) in online lists designed for virality, which frequently achieve phenomenal numbers of 'hits.'[9] Agata Pyzik deftly summarizes the politics at play here, noting that '[a]s the historical project is rejected, we observe the aestheticization of the communist period. And the greater the aestheticization, the bigger the political passivity.' This results in 'a dubious sympathy for communist culture and the symbols of the past without any political investment, uprooting them and rendering them meaningless' (2014: 23). Current struggles in post-socialist countries, she notes, are conspicuous only in their absence.

(Post-)Welfare and Post-Work Utopianism

Less obviously inflected by the uncanny melancholy of the end of history is the mobilization of a utopianism around proposals for the return of social democracy, with arguments for a stronger welfare state; the renationalization of utilities and industries; and soft Keynesian growth stimulus projects to ensure high levels of employment (Wright, 2013; Claeys, 2016; see Hayward, 2012 for a critique). The surprise election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in the UK in 2015 and the (ultimately unsuccessful but highly popular) US presidential candidacy campaign of Bernie Sanders can be seen as expressions of such desires. Yet questions must be asked of the political economies of these past

futures: the British welfare state was made possible by cheap labour from its dwindling but still existent Empire, and by the unpaid domestic and reproductive labour of women—particularly women of colour (Humm, 1991: 88; Bakshi et al., 1995); whilst the sense of futurity and possibility was in no small part produced by the Cold War–driven space race (Castillo, 2010).[10] It also elides the manner in which neoliberalism's erosion of the post-war social democratic consensus was parasitic upon demands that emerged as a response to some of social democracy's less utopian aspects: its Taylorist discipline, its classed, racialized and gendered divisions of labour; its dull, repetitive work and its frequently conservative politics of identity. The task of a utopian politics should not be to write off the utopianism to such demands as always-already complicit with neoliberalism, but rather to wrestle them away from neoliberalism.

More (seemingly) radical proposals for a utopian (post-)welfarism have recently emerged around demands for universal basic income (UBI, though sometimes framed as 'Citizens' Income'). This, it is proposed (in more radical arguments, at least), should be implemented alongside dramatic reductions in the working week enabled by automation and an end to the celebration of work as a good (Weeks, 2011; van Parijs, 2013; Dolan, 2014; Srnicek & Williams, 2015); functioning as a technology that is both utopian *and* realistic, directional without blueprinting. The 'demand,' meanwhile, is held to catalyze the critical mass required to effect such radical change (Weeks, 2011: 222). There are, however, a number of issues here, which call into question precisely how utopian UBI can be; and bring to mind Ruth Levitas' suggestion that when utopianism seeks to become realism it undermines itself as utopianism (2013: 143–144), something I explore in greater depth in relation to the state and capital in Chapter Five. Here, I want to focus on two major concerns (see Lewis & Bell, 2015 for further critique). The first is that just as the welfare state was made possible through exploitation, it is unclear how—without more radical changes—the automation to which UBI is hinged can be produced without reliance on similar structural inequalities, both globally and domestically: the mining of conflict minerals for computing technologies; feminized care labour; unpaid or very poorly paid prison and child labour; and poorly paid, feminized data-entry and clerical work, for example (Pelaez, 2014; Caffentzis, 2013; Huws, 2014; Dyer-Witheford, 2015). The second is that, whilst some proponents of such a position make further utopian demands—arguing for the end of mass incarceration, borders and various spatial inequalities, for example (Srnicek & Williams, 2015: 105; 176)—these demands frequently play second fiddle to those around UBI and automation, both in the arrangement of the argument and as the argument moves into the mainstream (in the UK both the Green Party and the Labour Party have engaged with UBI, and *The Guardian* newspaper has covered it fairly extensively: these 'secondary' demands do not appear in such debates).[11] This plays into a third danger (one that lurks around *any* form of utopianism, but which is especially prevalent here): that such demands might be taken up and incorporated by dystopian powers to further their own ends. The 'U' of UBI can quickly be forgotten, and the term

'Citizens' Income' clearly shows how it could create a two-tier society *and* strengthen arguments for stricter border controls (Bell, 2015).

These demand-based utopianisms deliberately eschew any notion of a blueprint, pointedly refusing to determine the nature of any world they might create: Srnicek and Williams, for example, state that 'we know not what a sociotechnical body can do. Who among us fully recognizes what untapped potentials await in the technologies that have already been developed? What sorts of postcapitalist communities could be built upon the material we already have?' (2015: 152; cf. Weeks, 2011: 220–221). They note that we would still not have the answers to these questions even if their demands should be met (2015: 176). In this there are considerable resonances with the utopianism outlined in Chapters Four and Five of this book. Indeed, I am not opposed to struggles against work (as we know it) *per se*, and when these are undertaken as part of a holistic utopianism that attends to the problems outlined above, post-workism has much to offer. This is something that I hope to explore in future work.

The Return of Cockaygne?

Despite the rejection of predetermined utopian visions in demand-based utopianism, it has, however, created and evolved alongside heuristic visions of a utopian future, which—despite the rather social democratic nature of this politics—organize around the signifier of 'luxury communism' or 'fully automated luxury communism' (FALC). Popularized by the tumblr blog 'Luxury Communism,' the British autonomist organization Plan C (with which Srnicek and Williams are affiliated) and the radical media collective Novara Media, its (partly) tongue-in-cheek visions of paradisiac futurity have punctured the fringes of the political mainstream, with articles in *The Guardian* (Merchant, 2015) and *Vice* (Bastani, 2015). In the latter, it is presented as a world where 'the fruits of the most powerful technologies humans have invented are shared more equally among us'; a world where 'you look after your nan a lot more, spend more time in bed with your partner and ride a driverless tesla motorcycle while listening to a music that you don't pay for and has no adverts . . . Cartier for everyone, MontBlanc for the masses and Chloe for all' (Bastani, 2015). In this, it forms an obvious continuum with the tradition of Cockaygne or 'peasant's paradise': a place of luxury without labour that played an important role in the pre-history of utopia (Morton, 1952; Claeys & Sargent, 1999: 71) and continues to find expression in the mainstream today, including—as Lyman Tower Sargent points out—in rapper Nelly's 2002 song Nellyville, in which the entire population of the eponymous town enjoys a life of considerable luxury (Sargent, 2015).

As with post-work/UBI utopianism, questions have been asked of how such visions might lead to a politics capable of negotiating ecological limits and thinking through a more equitable abolition of work (mcm_cmc, 2015; Butler on Novara FM, 2015). They also tend to repeat the nostalgia of hauntology: a Plan C poster asks if you 'remember the future?,' whilst another announces

'Luxury for All' over a John Hinde photograph of a monorail travelling over a swimming pool populated by happy bathers at a Butlin's holiday camp. An image of the (retro-)futuristic control room of Project Cybersyn—Allende's Chile's experiment with cybernetic economic planning in the early 1970s—is used to illustrate an article on an entirely different subject (Russell, 2016). As with Pyzik's critique of Soviet ruins nostalgia, there is more than a suspicion of aesthetics triumphing over politics here: Martin refers to Hinde's Butlin's photographs as depicting 'an idealized view of the world and, after the passage of time, acquire the power of a lost dream' (Parr in Hinde, 2002: 7). Trying to revive such dreams, I suggest, is not a viable utopian strategy. This is not least the case when we think about who was excluded from so many of them: the bathers in the Hinde photograph are all white, for example.

Indeed, there should always be concerns regarding what such Cockaygne-ian visions obscure (or even, in some cases, make fairly central). The poem from which Cockaygne takes its name—'The Land of Cockaygne'—contains the following section, which should strike today's reader as undercutting its supposed absolute equality:

> When the summer day is hot
> The younger nuns take out a boat,
> And forth upon the river clear,
> Some do row and some do steer.
> When they are far from their Abbey,
> They strip them naked for their play,
> And, plunging in the river's brim,
> Slyly address themselves to swim.
> When the young monks see that sport,
> Straightway thither they resort,
> And coming to the nuns anon,
> Each monk taketh to him one,
> And, swiftly bearing forth his prey,
> Carries her to the Abbey gray,
> And teaches her an orison [prayer],
> Jigging up and jigging down.
> The monk that is a stallion good,
> And can manage well his hood,
> He shall have, without a doubt,
> Twelve wives before the year is out
>   (quoted in Morton, 1952: 284)

Another famous peasant's paradise—'Big Rock Candy Mountain'—also details sexual abuse. In Harry McClintock's telling (the famous version), this is ostensibly about a land in which no work needs to be done and where nature provides plenty to satisfy luxurious tastes.

Yet McClintock also wrote (but never recorded) a final verse in which this utopian vision is used by an older tramp (a 'jocker') to coerce a younger man (a 'punk') to 'apprentice' to him. The promise of a good place is mobilized by the jocker to 'boss' the punk into sexual subservience, transforming the song from a happy utopianism to a darkly satirical critique of the often predatory, nonconsensual sexual relationships between older and younger hobos:

> The punk rolled up his big blue eyes and said to the jocker:
> "Sandy I've hiked and wandered too
> But I ain't seen any candy.
> I've hiked and hiked till my feet are sore
> I'll be God damned if I hike anymore
> To be buggered sore like a hobo's whore
> In the Big Rock Candy Mountains."
>
> (quoted in Lochrie, 2016: 84)

My point in raising this is absolutely not to suggest that individuals who advocate FALC are doing so for similar reasons—although the prevalence of sexual violence in left-wing struggle means that such a fear must absolutely be given full consideration in *all* radical or activist spaces (Downes, 2016)—but rather to suggest that visions of future plenitude have frequently been used to legitimate various forms of domination: as late as 1952, A. L. Morton argued that Cockaygne prefigured the classless society, which he insisted the Soviet Union was heading towards (1952: 275). Less explicitly problematically, but in a similar vein, Srnicek and Williams argue that the flourishing of various forms of life 'relies upon the elimination of capitalism and is dependent upon a [universal] counter-hegemonic postcapitalist project as its presupposed condition of existence' (2015: 200): a position that allows them to propose a vanguardist and (at least partly) hierarchical structure for utopianism in which a technocratic elite determine appropriate trajectories, to which 'alternatives' to their Eurocentric modernization must remain subordinate until the establishment of postcapitalism. Furthermore, they hold that this future is delayed by those who are angry about dominations in the present, who are accused of cultivating 'moral purity' rather than any constructive political action (2015: 8). This supposedly righteous, 'affective' 'anger' is held to 'replace and stymie' rather than 'complement and enhance' a detached, 'abstract' analysis that helps usher in the future (Srnicek & Williams, 2015: 8); a claim made by many of those with similar political and organizational commitments (Fisher, 2013; Laboria Cuboniks, 2015; see itiswhowillit, 2014 for an important critique from within struggle). As Sophie Lewis and I have written in response to this position:

> It is, of course, possible for anger and moralizing to cripple movement (though this may sometimes be for the best: not all movement is good movement). But by failing to set boundaries or give examples to demonstrate

when affect's "complementing and enhancing" gives way to "replacing and stymying" "abstract analysis" (a binary opposition we do not accept), Srnicek and Williams leave the door open to those who see every expression of anger about abuse in leftist spaces as an unnecessary drag on the future.

(2015: thedisorderofthings.com)

Contra this position, in Chapter Five I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed to suggest that once we abandon the future as the *a priori* terrain around which a utopian politics is organized, it is possible to see such expressions of 'killjoy' anger as necessary components of a utopianism.

Utopia after the Future

No Future, Utopia Now!

In his 2011 book *After the Future*, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi outlines an alternative to these strangely nostalgic futural utopianisms. For him, as for so many theorists of the present, our era is one without any sense of the future as a qualitatively different space and time. 'In the last three decades of the [twentieth] century,' he writes, 'the *utopian imagination* was slowly overturned, and has been replaced by the *dystopian imagination*' (2011: 17, emphasis in original). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's *What Is Philosophy?*, he argues that this has resulted in widespread depression: not of the individual subject, but as a social symptom—'an inability to find sense though action, through communication, through life' (2011: 64). Here he comes close to Gilbert's and Stiegler's concepts of 'disaffection,' but despite this does not call for a renewal of futurist utopianism as a utopian antidote. Rather, he argues that we can no longer believe that 'notwithstanding the darkness of the present, the future will be bright,' but nor should we, for '[t]he rise of the myth of the future is rooted in modern capitalism, in the experience of expansion of the economy and knowledge' (2011: 18; cf. Koselleck, 2004). To believe in the future in such a manner is to reproduce the status quo, denying the very possibility of the future you claim to be embracing. Thus, as Berardi puts it in his 'Manifesto of Post-Futurism,' utopians should 'sing to the infinity of the present and abandon the illusion of a future' (2011: 166). They need to be able to communicate and create their own meanings in the here-and-now. 'Sense isn't found in the world, but in what we are able to create' (2011: 166).

Here, he suggests a prefigurative politics that operates within and against—rather than beyond (at least initially)—that which exists. It is precisely this form of politics that is brought to bear on the world through riots, demands, squats, proclamations, occupations, demonstrations, autonomist unionism and numerous modes of solidarity that frequently pass unnoticed. It demands that Black Lives Matter. It announces its presence in the present without apology. It creates—however temporarily—social relations that prefigure the world it

wants to realize, as best it can, given current conditions (Adler, 2012; Maeckel-bergh, 2012; Sex Worker Open University, 2014; Solidarity Federation, 2014; Bailey & Leonard, 2015; Vasudevan, 2015; Clover, 2016; Watt, 2016). These movement-moments resonate not just across space but connect with (even as they differentiate themselves from) well-established genealogies of struggle and organization (Ross, 2015). Specific examples of such praxis have, of course, met with varied success, but their existence serves a key purpose: to foster new pedagogies of solidarity and resistance that do not just keep alive the *idea* that 'another world is possible,' but move to realize such a world.

Like Berardi, the (broadly) libertarian communist blogging collective Out of the Woods have argued that such utopianism should avoid the terrain of the future.[12] This is clearest in their essay 'No Future,' written for the *The Occupied Times* (a broadly autonomist Marxist newspaper that emerged out of Occupy London), in which they criticize futurally directed environmentalism. 'The future,' they write:

> is a nebulous and complex thing. It is a tangle of potentialities and causali-ties, a construct of chance and luck, a mess of the plausible and implau-sible. Most of us struggle to imagine the world in five years time, let alone fifty. The future is a terrain on which we are all blind, to attempt to fight our battles there is madness . . . we must abandon the future, for we cannot win there. No future, for we will never convince the majority to fight for the sake of a time they cannot imagine. No future, for capital will always defeat any strategy based on a "next-ness", for against airy notions of tomorrow's world, they can posit the cold hard facts of today material-ized in wages and jobs. No future, because, right now, there is literally no future, right now we are condemned to collapse.
>
> (Out of the Woods, 2014a: 11)

Drawing on the work of Lee Edelman, they note that this future is also 'repro-ductive,' which is to say that it is tied to the figure of the child: the innocent victim of our dystopianism in whose name we must change our actions. This, they argue, ties futurity to a conservative heteronormativity of the kind found in the 'hope' attached to O-90's unborn baby in some readings of *We*. Perhaps, by way of contrast, one of Maria's most cutting remarks in *Code 46* is a more appropriate position: in response to William's assertion that his children are special, she states that 'everyone's children are so special, it makes you wonder where all the normal adults come from.' The answer, of course, is the present and so this is where our political attention must be focused; where our utopia-nism must be grounded. If there is hope in *We*, this position suggests, it is with the Mephi immanently organizing within and against OneState, not in a mes-sianic attachment to an unborn child.

This refusal of the future differs greatly from post-utopianism, however, for Out of the Woods state that '[t]o survive we must couple bleak reality with the utopian impulse and shout instead: "No Future, Utopia Now!"' (2014a: 11).

There is no time for abstract visions of the golden city in the future, they implore; we need a material utopianism within and against the here-and-now. A similar but more radically negative approach is suggested by Sam Kriss, who suggests that 'the refusal to consider the future might be called Utopia—the only Utopia that's still possible' (2015).

The Future out of the Present

It is important to acknowledge the difference between a utopianism that refuses to consider the future as such and a utopianism that does not understand the future as an *a priori* terrain from which the correct orientation for struggle and organization might be deduced. Indeed, in his review of *Inventing the Future*, Kriss undercuts his absolute rejection of the future by suggesting that the problem with much future-oriented utopianism is not 'the future' itself but its crystallization, which chains it to a static notion of the present (or even the past, as with nostalgic futurisms). It is in this way that the future comes to function as an oppressive, conservative principle regulating behavior in the present. Indeed, Kriss suggests an alternative understanding of the future, in which it is not a '*terrain*, a neutral substrate in which everything is set' but rather 'something which is continually produced by a present that is in turn transformed' (2016: viewpointmag.com).

To *détourne* Oscar Wilde's quote, then, my argument is that the task for utopians is to look at a map of the world and identify where the utopias are; think through what makes them utopian; and think through how to intensify them so that they expand both qualitatively and quantitatively. Utopianism, then, simultaneously works within, against and beyond this (and any) present. We should neither join the Mephi as they flee the world for nowhere nor join those who anchor their hopes in an elsewhere/elsewhen. Rather, we should immanently (re)produce somewhere—the no-good place—within, against and beyond our present. Heaven might be a place where nothing ever happens, but heaven is not a place on earth. Utopia can be.

The Trouble with the Local

There are, of course, utopianisms that do not operate on the terrain of the future, focusing instead on alternatives within the present. Often, these are to be found in celebrations of the local, the small-scale and the authentic, creating a 'sense of place' to contrast with contemporary dystopianism's apparent placelessness (Relph, 1976). David Harvey—who is critical of such a politics—notes that 'place comes into its own as a locus of some potentially unalienated direct sensuous interaction with environs' (Harvey, 1996: 302). Such a politics is articulated towards the end of *Code 46* when William and Maria abscond to the 'free port' of Jebel Ali on the outskirts of Dubai. Jebel Ali is *afuera,* but Yasser Elsheshtawy is right to note that, in stark contrast to the undifferentiated, open, free and threatening desert space that has previously been used to represent the

'outside,' it is 'portrayed as being "real," and . . . accordingly suggest[s] a sense of humanity' (2011: 21). It is 'lively' and 'idiosyncratic' (Goss, 2007). Here, William and Maria find temporary 'solace and peace, a sense of realness that has escaped them elsewhere.' (Elsheshtawy, 2011: 20)

Through contrasting Jebel Ali with those cities on the 'inside,' *Code 46* presents the viewer with an opposition between 'authentic,' utopian place and 'inauthentic,' dystopian placelessness; a division further articulated by the film's director Michael Winterbottom, who explained his decision to film in Dubai with reference to its 'artificial' and 'arbitrary' architectural aesthetic (quoted in Elsheshtawy, 2011: 24). This is reinforced through cinematic techniques: the 'inside' world is shot in muted colours and largely at night-time, whilst the 'outside' is bright and—in Jebel Ali—diversely colourful. What *Code 46* offers, then, is a *romantic* critique of capitalism, which is understood to destroy 'real,' 'authentic' social relations, the human subject, and an 'increasingly rare' sense of place (Tuan, 1974: 152). Indeed, so enticing is life on the 'outside' that Elsheshtawy can read Maria's enforced statelessness at the end of the film as a partially happy ending. 'She is lonely, aged and desolate,' he writes, 'but finally free and liberated.' She thus stands in stark contrast to William's 'mindless existence—induced by forced amnesia—in Seattle, going about his daily routine in the midst of gleaming towers and an immaculate apartment.' Such imagery, he suggests, provides 'an implicit critique of present-day conditions which relegate inhabitants of global cities to anonymity and deprive them of their humanity' (2011: 30).

Code 46 provides a useful corrective to apocalyptic, racist and classist narratives of life in shantytowns, barrios and slums around the world; and to the hylomorphic claim that only the ordering of life in accordance with some external principle can create anything positive. Yet it is guilty of the romanticization of poverty—something that Elsheshtawy points to (2011: 30). For while places such as Jebel Ali are very likely teeming with self-organized utopian potential (Neuwirth, 2006), to uncritically celebrate their otherness is a depoliticizing move that ignores the struggles of people who live in them; and plays into the hands of capital and the state, which are only too happy to absorb such claims to deny the need for any structural change (Davis, 2006: 71). There is a dangerous narrative in *Code 46*, then, in which poverty is equated with happiness and freedom; and wealth with misery and control. It is one thing to point out that living a life of privilege, comfort and luxury does not bring happiness; but quite another to suggest that living the opposite might do.

It is not just deprivation that is romanticized here, however, for Jebel Ali's 'authentic,' utopian sense of place from which this critique is made is also heavily racialized. Its inhabitants do not use the multilingual global language spoken by other characters in the film but converse in Arabic, whilst local tropes of architecture and urban design feature heavily. Having been made stateless, Maria is shown wearing a headscarf: a profound marker of racial identity (Delphy, 2005). In a postmodern twist on the 'noble savage,' race here functions as an exotic marker of authenticity: a focal point for postcolonial melancholic

desire. The camera's gaze is that of the white man. Such a politics serves to produce racialized bodies—particularly those in informal settlements across the globe as the bearers of a realness and authenticity that pre-exists capitalism and continues 'outside' it, not unlike Zamyatin's Scythians. This is a highly problematic move, which in this guise denies Black claims to technology and futurity (cf. Eshun, 1998).

Similarly romantic notions of 'local' place persist in rich countries. Here, 'authentic' alternatives to capital might be predicated on slower, organic forms of production and consumption (and are often framed around vague signifiers of the 'artisan' or 'craft'). Such a politics may be manifested in campaigns against chain stores, the instigation of local currencies or campaigns to buy local produce; and are frequently coupled to campaigns against new housing developments and fears of overpopulation. Undifferentiated global space is positioned as a threat to the local 'feel' of place. Whilst such movements are often articulated through (vaguely) anti-capitalist rhetoric with a decidedly ecological tinge (and such tactics may have much to offer post-capitalist planning), they are also often coupled to a form of local jingoism that—at times—comes perilously close to, is indistinguishable from, or forms an integral part of far-right discourse (Park, 2013; Out of the Woods, 2014b).

Furthermore, the idea of utopia's 'place' functioning as a preexisting 'outside' to capital's spatiality is highly problematic: certain places may enjoy a degree of *relative* autonomy from capitalism and the state, but this is an autonomy conditioned upon struggles against the threat of dispossession, accumulation and subsumption (the capitalist acquisition of land and resources and transformation of modes of production); and against the authoritarian 'management' of such places' 'surplus populations' through imprisonment, camps and extra-legal brutality (Davis, 2006; Wilson Gilmore, 2007). In many other places, meanwhile, a politics of localism is entirely compatible with the market, producing a 'unique selling point' premised on 'authenticity.' This is a hallmark of contemporary middle-class tourism (MacCannell, 1999), as well as 'creative' entrepreneurialism (Zurkin 2011), both of which are frequently premised on the identification of particular areas deemed to have an 'authentic' aesthetic that provides a distinct 'sense of place'; and which frequently drive out or alter the place-making practices of the very populations responsible for creating this 'authenticity' in the first place.

Indigenous and Peasant Localisms

Despite this warning, not all locally specific cultures should be dismissed as reactionary forms complicit in the rule of capital, for many *do* exist 'outside' of capitalism (and struggle to remain as such). Across the world, Indigenous people and peasants are involved in struggles to defend their ways of life, which are inseparable from the places in which they live.[13] Their politics are thus place-based and locally specific but should not be understood as being equivocal to romantically conservative localisms. Whilst many who live in

such places have no choice but to sell their labour power to survive as a result of the enclosure of land and resources they previously depended on for their reproduction (meaning that the division is less stark than in *We*: there is no 'Green Wall' separating capitalist space from space in which other forms of production predominate), such places often retain substantial amounts of non-colonial/statist/capitalist culture. As such, their theories, practices and cosmologies have much to offer struggle within and against the present, although—as I note in Chapter Five—this must be a mutual, rather than transactional, relationship, and one that requires far more engagement than the noble savagery of Zamyatin (Deloria, 1973; Midnight Notes Collective, 1990; Nakata, 2002; Ntuli, 2002; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Kulchyski, 2005; Gambetti, 2009; Coulthard, 2010; Reyes & Kaufman, 2011; Simpson, 2011, 2014; Hancox, 2013; Watts, 2013; Zepeda, 2014; Shiva, 2016).

The World as Critical Dystopia

Our world is, as I argued in the previous chapter, dystopian. Yet this dystopia contains numerous utopianisms that, in various ways, seek to realize alternative ways of organizing life through some form of collective struggle. To the extent that some of these provide hope (as ever, distinguished from optimism) our world can, perhaps, be positioned as a critical dystopia. Originally posited as a literary form (Baccolini, 2000; Moylan, 2000; Donawerth, 2003), here I take critical dystopia to name a configuration of place (re)produced through relations of domination, but which is actively resisted through collective struggle(s). This, I suggest, is precisely the situation we find ourselves in now. The post-utopian project is not, and never will be, complete. Pockets of resistance, hope and—yes—utopia(nism) can be found within and against it, and from their uncanny positions they threaten to unfold outwards, beyond that which exists.

Notes

1. I am avoiding the terms 'fascist' and 'neo-fascist' here because there is not space to properly engage with debates on the nature of fascism. I would be inclined to argue that this is a fascist politics, albeit one that has developed significantly since the 1930s. It should also be kept in mind that this book was written prior to the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America, an event that lends an even greater urgency to analyses of the relationships between (neo)liberalism, fascism and affect.
2. The term 'liberal' has different meanings in Europe and the United States, of course, although what I say here holds true for both.
3. I use 'supposedly' here because of the influence of Spinoza, who was Jewish, on Negri's thought. Anti-Semitism has, of course, been a persistent feature throughout European history, but Spinoza lived during a period when anti-Semitism became a racialized phenomenon against which Europe defined itself (Yovel, 1989: 189–190; Andijar, 2003; Goldstein, 2009). Whilst his excommunication by Amsterdam's Jewish community is held by some to mark his 'entry' into the canon of western European philosophy, this reading has (rightly) been criticized for its anti-Semitism (Popkin, 1977); and Goldstein argues that Spinoza's philosophy can in fact be read as a response to this anti-Semitism.

4. Apocalypticism can also empower subjects without such privilege, of course; and perhaps the issue is precisely whose apocalypticism ends up being fetishized through popular culture. The 2015 film *Mad Max: Fury Road*, for example, gives expression to significantly more marginalized apocalypticisms of gender, race and Indigeniety (deFreitas, 2015; Jeanne the Fangirl, 2015; Laura, 2015; although see Khan, 2015 for a criticism); whilst W.E.B. Du Bois wrote an apocalyptic science fiction short story—'The Comet' (2007)—in which a comet hits New York and seemingly kills everyone but a poor black man named Jim Davis and a rich white woman named Julia. Jim is empowered by this for a short time—eating in a restaurant that would not normally serve him—but when Julia's father reappears with a group of people, racial hierarchies are immediately re-instated.

5. It is worth quoting the whole of Diderot's 'first tenet' of the 'poetics of ruins,' which describes '[o]ur glance liner[ing] over the debris of a triumphal arch, a portico, a pyramid, a temple, a palace, and we retreat into ourselves; we contemplate the ravages of time, and in our imagination we scatter the rubble of the very buildings in which we live over the ground; in that moment solitude and silence prevail around us, we are the sole survivors of an entire nation that is no more' (quoted in Dubin, 2010: 13).

6. The original Jameson quote is in his 1991 essay 'The Antimonies of Postmodernity,' and is as follows: 'It seems easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; and perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination' (1998: 50). Slavoj Žižek then paraphrases this (vaguely referencing Jameson) by saying 'it seems easier to imagine the "end of the world" than a far more modest change in the mode of production' (1994: 1). Jameson then (perhaps deliberately) fails to acknowledge himself as the source of this quote—writing, 'If it is so, as someone has observed, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism ...' (2005: 199). Mark Fisher, meanwhile, is probably most responsible for its contemporary ubiquity by using the quote so prominently in *Capitalist Realism* (2009).

7. See, for example, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1993: 76–78); Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1901) and Thomas Hood's (appalling) poem 'Lament for the Decline of Chivalry' (1828). These two moments—some 200 years apart—can clearly be associated with bourgeois liberal democracy: the former with its initial emergence and the latter with its (supposed) triumph.

8. In the case of Richard Littler's Scarfolk project (which began as a blog and has now spawned a book), this slips over into dystopianism (Littler, 2014). Like so many fictional dystopias it extrapolates from our present rather than locating the source of the 'bad' elsewhere and elsewhen. Unlike most dystopian works, however, the extrapolation is projected *backwards* in time, with contemporary surveillance trends filtered through an aesthetic of 1970s public service broadcasting and government posters.

9. A small sample here includes: 'Abandoned and Forgotten: Huge Futuristic Monuments in the Former Yugoslavia' (1,490 Facebook shares, *International Business Times*, 2014); 'Next stop, Siberia! The Strange and Beautiful world of Soviet bus stops' (8,530 shares, *The Guardian*, 2015); 'The Wild Architecture of Soviet-Era Bus Stops' (1,944 Facebook shares, *Wired*, 2015); 'Soviet Ghosts: An Empire in Decay' (6,029 Facebook shares, *The Guardian*, 2014); 'Wreckage in the snow: Russia's forgotten future—in pictures' (3,848 shares, *The Guardian*, 2015); or '25 Abandoned Yugoslavia Monuments that look like they're from the future,' (*Crack Two*, 2011). Statistics correct as of March 2016.

10. This strange mix of British confidence and the threat and thrill of Soviet communism is particularly evident in the work of Public Service Broadcasting—comfortably the most commercially successful 'hauntological' band (whose work lacks the uncanny subtlety of their influences).

11. Rutger Bregman's *Utopia for Realists* does give equal billing to the demand for the abolition of borders but at the time of writing the English translation is forthcoming. (Bregman, 2016).
12. I have, in recent months, begun to write as a member of Out of the Woods. The arguments discussed here were made before I had any involvement with the group, however, and should not be conflated with my position.
13. Indigenous people are generally understood as those whose ways of life are inherently tied to (and inseparable from) a particular 'place' (the concept of 'land' is often of extreme importance here). 'Peasant' is often used more broadly to refer to rural populations who reproduce themselves with a significant degree of autonomy from capitalism. This is clearly not a binary opposition and the definition of 'peasant' offered by the international peasant movement Via Campesina has obvious overlaps with (and includes) Indigenous peoples:

> A peasant is a man or woman [sic] of the land, who has a direct and special relationship with the land and nature through the production of food and/or other agricultural products. Peasants work the land themselves, rely[ing] above all on family labour and other small-scale forms of organizing labour. Peasants are traditionally embedded in their local communities and they take care of local landscapes and of agro-ecological systems. The term peasant can apply to any person engaged in agriculture, cattle-raising, pastoralism, handicrafts-related to agriculture or a related occupation in a rural area. This includes Indigenous people working on the land.
>
> (Via Campesina, 2009)

(It should be noted that not all peasants identify as 'man or woman,' hence the '[sic].')

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3   Rethinking Utopian Studies

Introduction

This chapter explores the inter-disciplinary (or perhaps, sometimes, multidisci-
plinary), academic field of 'utopian studies.' It traces out (and contributes to)
positions, debates, disagreements and nuances in the field (and engages with
exclusions) in order to provide context, inspiration and space for the development
of 'an affective understanding of utopianism' in chapters that follow. It is particu-
larly concerned with definitional issues (and problems directly arising from these),
and so a number of important political and practical debates—particularly around
the problem of agency and scale—are only briefly highlighted. These, however,
are engaged with more substantially in following chapters. For the reader new to
the field of utopian studies it is hoped that what follows provides a useful entry
point to positions in the field, although it should be understood that I do not intend
(nor think it possible) to provide an objective overview. Readers who are less
interested in the field may wish to skip this chapter—at least for now—and turn
back to it should the need arise. For reasons of space I have chosen not to engage
with those who have coined neologisms designed to replace utopia or supplement
utopia (an incomplete list might include 'ecotopia,' Michel Foucault's 'heteroto-
pia,' Antonio Negri's 'disutopia' and Chris Carlsson's 'nowtopia').

  Tasks such as this are difficult, of course: utopian studies does not exist as a
pre-given field that one can simply engage with, but rather is reproduced as a
field through any such engagements. Therefore it is important to acknowledge
that the task I carry out here is constructive as much as it is analytic: the reader
of this chapter will have a sense of some of the key texts, ideas, trends and
debates in utopian studies, but not all of them; and no matter how much I insist
that this should not be seen as an 'overview' of the field, it nonetheless helps to
shape it in a small way. The texts I engage with are, on the whole, those that are
most frequently cited in the field (and thus play the biggest role in determining
it) and those that help me advance the argument I wish to make in this book
(though many belong to both categories).[1]

Utopia, Perfection, Progress and Idealism

Utopia is commonly understood as a place that claims to have fulfilled a prede-
termined (and ostensibly 'Good') form of political organization. Such claims,

however, are held to be necessarily false, with firmly hierarchical (if not totalitarian) forms of governance required to prevent 'deviance' from the purported 'perfection,' meaning that the 'utopia' slides into, or is indistinguishable from, dystopia. The reduction of utopia(nism) to this understanding has been widely critiqued—and often rejected—in the field of utopian studies.

Lyman Tower Sargent takes particular issue with perfection, arguing that '*perfect, perfection*, and their variants are freely used by scholars in defining utopias. They should not be' (1994: 9). And it is certainly true that perfection should not be a defining feature. Yet even if we adopt a colloquial understanding of perfection as referring to an object that meets idealized standards of perfection that would be impossible to achieve in material reality, then it is possible to take issue with this: many cockaygnes depict perfect worlds; or rather worlds that were designed to appear perfect for their intended audiences (here we see the impossibility of any absolute perfection: what appears 'perfect' will also be situated, not least in response to that which is particularly imperfect in contemporary society); and this trope of a world (or, indeed, universe) of perfect post-work bliss can also be found in the post-singularity imaginations of some varieties of transhumanist utopianism (indicating the near permanent disgruntlement with the drudgery of work and pain; and the fear of death) (Hauskeller, 2012).[2]

More detailed visions of utopian societies are by their very nature not quite so perfect as this. But then maybe perfection is not quite so perfect either: the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that 'perfect' refers to an object that is 'as good as it could possibly be' (oed.com). This raises all kinds of issues about the limitations implied by 'possibly' (scarcity? human nature? mortality?) and supports my claim that we see the claims to 'the end of history' as utopian: things are as Good as they could possibly be *given* human nature, at least according to the neoliberals. It is this kind of perfection that J. C. Davis associates with utopia (a concept to which he is well disposed). Indeed, so committed is he to the idea that utopias are 'absolutely' perfect societies (1981: 38, 40)—human limitations notwithstanding—that he argues they require 'totalitarian' control (1981: 40), restricting freedom to the 'freedom from disorder and moral chaos, freedom from moral choice altogether' (1981: 384). Krishan Kumar also looks favourably on utopia and associates it with perfection, stating (incorrectly) that 'if there is one thing that students of utopia agree on,' it is that utopias are perfect (1991: 48). Clearly they do not agree on the nature of perfection, however, for Kumar associates it with endless progress driven by scientific and technological advances (1987: 32, 43, 223), a form of progress that Davis does not permit, for it would necessitate political change (and thus deviation from 'perfection') (Davis, 1981: 34).[3] For Kumar, such dynamism remains strangely apolitical: it reinforces rather than threatens social arrangements. The infinite perfectibility of the individual allows society to mold them into pliant utopians (1987: 28). Given the supplementation of disciplinary subjection with techniques of control—a shift enabled to a considerable degree by technological developments—Kumar, unwittingly, could here be describing recent history.

Although Davis and Kumar are wrong to offer such a narrow definition of utopia (both extrapolate from utopian texts produced in particular times and places to provide general definitions of utopia), it is important not to throw the baby out with the bathwater in defending utopia here. There undoubtedly *are* fictional utopias—and 'actually existing' spatial practices—that conformed (or attempted to conform) to one of these understandings of perfection, even where they disavow this. Here, utopianism becomes a 'hylomorphic' practice of applying a particular masculine ideal to feminized space (understood as a container constituted only by inertia or chaos) in order to transform this into a 'Good place' and then to reproduce it as such (see Protevi, 2001, for more on hylomorphism; Sofia, 2000 for the gendering of space as a container). Time is understood either as hostile to this place (for it carries the threat of change) or as a linear operation that enables this place to progress, but not to fundamentally change. Dohra Ahmad (2009) associates these two conceptions of the relationship between space and time in utopian writing as indicative of two particular colonial imaginations: sixteenth and seventeenth century 'exploration' and nineteenth and twentieth century 'developmentalism,' which roughly corresponds with the periods from which Davis and Kumar develop their understandings of utopia. It is my contention that such utopianism is inherently colonial and that it presupposes a state as the only political actor capable of exercising the levels of control required for this hylomorphism. Indeed, Davis argues that early modern utopian literature 'prefigured' the modern state, 'prepar[ing] the language and conceptual tools to accompany its emergence' (1981: 8–9).

The Imbrication of Utopianism and Colonialism

With this in mind we would do well to reframe Kumar's claim that utopianism is integral (and unique) to what he refers to as the West's 'distinctive historical mission' now that it 'controls, to all intents and purposes, world development' (1987: 19, 423) by refusing to overlook the complicity and influence of utopianism in colonialism (Davis, 1977; Hadfield, 1998: 7–11; Ahmad, 2009; Ashcroft, 2012: 2); and to acknowledge that colonialism itself can be seen as a utopian project (Ashcroft, 2012; Hickey, 2014; Ahmed, 2016). Indeed, Jeffrey Knapp argues that More's *Utopia* 'contains perhaps the first Tudor attempt to elaborate a theory of colonization,' and draws on D. B. Quinn to claim that More was 'the first Englishman to use the word *colonia*' in the manner we do today (Knapp, 1992: 21). We could also draw on work highlighting how these colonial logics of inert or chaotic space resurface in contemporary practices of gentrification (Smith, 1996; Gann, 2014) to consider this as a contemporary form of utopianism.

This colonial utopianism is both gendered and racialized in that it constructs and polices race, gender and sexual identity; and through these constructions (re)produces gender norms, patriarchy, heteronormativity and white supremacy (Foucault, 2004: 61–62; King, 2013; McLean, 2014; Amadiume, 2015; Ahmed, 2016), with particular bodies subject to subjugation and particular

forms of knowledge excluded and repressed in the name of utopia. Utopian hylomorphism is thus understood as a white, masculine project of order and security—though Chris Ferns notes that this security is *also* feminized, echoing the security provided by the mother (Ferns, 1999: 44). It is important to note here that even ostensibly emancipatory utopian projects organized along anarchist, feminist or communist lines can function in this manner. The titular island in More's *Utopia* (where property is held in common) was a colonial project, after all (it was a penninsula called Abraxa prior to being settled by King Utopos, who ordered the digging of a channel to transform it into an island called Utopia, and it engages in settler colonialism in other lands) (More, 2012). Likewise, elements of colonial utopianism persist in the neo-anarchism of kibbutzism (Davis, 1977), in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopian novel *Herland* (1998), and in William Morris' anarchistic *News from Nowhere* (Ahmad, 2009). As Karl Hardy notes, utopianism—in many guises—must be recognized as 'being predicated upon and, therefore, implicated in the ongoing naturalization of settler colonization' (2012: 127).

False Binaries

For both Davis and Kumar, any rejection of utopianism as outlined here necessitates an embrace of anti-utopianism. The former focuses on anti-utopianism *within* (supposedly) utopian societies, analyzing individual 'anti-utopian' characters such as Winston Smith in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s and D-503 in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (texts set in worlds more commonly understood as dystopias, but which fit Davis' category of 'utopia' and which he implicitly positions as utopias). He argues that their anti-utopianism constitutes a form of 'miscreance' or 'criminality,' which stems from a desire for 'self-affirmation' rather than the embrace of the totalized collective (1981: 374–375). Kumar, as we have seen, suggests that there is no political dissatisfaction internal to utopia and so positions anti-utopianism as an approach external to utopian texts. In particular, he focuses on readers of utopian texts put off by what they perceive as their 'arrogant and destructive assertion of hubris' (1987: 423). Yet this rejection, he suggests, leaves us hamstrung in the present: to reject such utopianism is to end progress.

This, it seems, leaves us in an awkward double-bind. We either accept perfection (as absolute or progressive) and embrace a form of utopianism that has historically (re)produced white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy and heteronormativity or we reject it and embrace either individualism or the present. Yet this is a false opposition. It is telling, for example, that Davis sees *We*'s D-503 simply as an individual rebel, ignoring his involvement in the Mephi. Neither he nor Kumar leave any space for collective organization within, against or beyond 'perfect' utopia; and they ignore the possibility of organizing to overcome structures of domination, rather than simply out of some individualist, existentialist compulsion. Where would a queer movement organizing within, against and beyond the heteronormative patriarchy in the future Boston

of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* or the future England of William Morris' *News From Nowhere* (Bammer, 1991: 28; cf. Ferns, 1999) fit? Utopian or anti-utopian? What of anti-colonial or indigenous utopianism (Ahmad, 2009; Hardy, 2012; Ahmed, 2016)? There are, clearly, positions other than the embrace of a 'perfect,' colonial utopianism or an individualist anti-utopianism. It is my contention that this position can also be called 'utopian.' In fact, in providing a more thoroughgoing critique of the present and pointing to radically different forms that the 'good place' might take, it is my contention that this position is far more utopian than those of Davis and Kumar.

Contemporary Utopian Studies

I am not alone in thinking that the utopian is a little more complex than Davis and Kumar suggest. Indeed, the vast majority of work in contemporary utopian studies has sought to rethink utopia in ways that go beyond, reject or undo many of the harms caused by these notions of perfection and progress. In doing so, however, it often overlooks the importance of place. In this, then, utopian studies remains strangely resistant to the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences, with time (often implicitly) playing a more important role than space. Although this can in part be explained by the influence of various marxisms (reacting to the supposed 'end of history'), there are—as we shall see—also strongly temporal utopian studies trends influenced by postcolonialism, queer theory and feminism. Even anarchist contributions—which frequently focus more explicitly on spatiality—often shy away from definitions of utopia as place.

In order to trace how place is often sidelined or disavowed in utopian studies I outline three (very) broad tendencies within the contemporary field: (1) a focus on utopia's function, which often spills over into understanding utopia as function; (2) utopia(nism) as temporality; (3) utopianism as prefigurative practice. These are not mutually exclusive—it is perfectly possible to engage with all three approaches (the attentive reader will note that many theorists are discussed under more than one tendency)—and so my purpose here is not to firmly situate thinkers within a particular tendency—but rather to explicate how these tendencies appear within and across works of utopian studies.

The 'Function' Approach

The function-based tendency within utopian studies is primarily concerned with the relationship between a text, object or event (hereafter I use 'text' as shorthand, but this should be understood in the broadest possible sense of the term) and a subject who is external to it. This externality may be because the utopian text has never existed, existed in the past, is set in the future, is set in an alternative dimension, could never exist or was encountered for a fixed period of time. The self-conscious literary utopia (by which I mean texts that consciously insert themselves into the utopian genre) is the dominant form here,

and a number of theorists utilizing this approach draw heavily on methods of literary criticism, although it is not solely a hermeneutic approach.

The function of such texts is held to be heuristic, which is to say that they do not provide ideal blueprints to be realized in full, but rather lever open a conceptual space in which new thought may emerge. Utopia is rejected as a blueprint but preserved as a dream, to paraphrase Tom Moylan (2014: 10). This dream may be one of affirmation, in which the reader is drawn towards imagining how the world might be otherwise (perhaps informed by the text to a significant extent); or one of negation, in which the reader is 'cognitively estranged' from the world-as-is. As I shall shortly argue, this former function is dependent upon the latter, although the reverse is not necessarily true. Either way, the utopian is not closed—its meaning is not determined, or at least not limited, by its content—but is open: it actively involves the subject who reads, experiences or witnesses the text, object or event.

Utopia's affirmative function is perhaps more intuitively easy to grasp. The claim here is that the text instigates, increases and/or improves the capacity of the subject who encounters it to imagine an alternative future. Rather than dictating the future to us, it allows for reflexive, provisional, dialogical and democratic debates on what we do and do not want (Sargisson, 2012; Levitas, 2013: xi, 149). We cognitively and/or affectively sense that alternatives are possible and desirable; and—perhaps—begin to reflect on what we might do to realize them, although this transformation from impulse to action is the subject of considerable debate (Levitas, 2011: 113; Moylan, 2014).

On its own, this affirmative function is entirely consistent with Kumar's claim that utopian texts encourage progress. In the works I discuss here, however, there is an insistence that this moment is bound up with the utopian's negative, estranging mode, which throws dominant bourgeois ideology 'into disarray' (Moylan, 2008: 82; Thompson, 2011: 790; Weeks, 2011: 207; Sargisson, 2012). In this, the ability of a utopian text, object or event to gesture towards a genuine alternative to the present is predicated on it negating the present (Ahmad, 2009; Weeks, 2011; Sargisson, 2012; Moylan, 2014). It must be 'literally out of this world' (Moylan, 2014: 39) and so enable us to 'historicize' our present, which is to say that we recognize that which exists as a contingent product of history, struggle and betrayal rather than as an immutable, fixed form. The 'tyranny of the now' is disrupted, as Muñoz puts it (2009: 29) and the reader becomes increasingly 'estranged' from dystopian reality (Suvin, 1979; Ricoeur, 1986: 16–17) such that our present becomes impossible (Moylan, 2008). In this, the idea of straightforward 'progress' from the status quo to a better world (a myth that, *contra* Kumar, is now understood to be central to the preservation of the status quo) is also revealed as an impossibility.

For some, this estrangement becomes the primary function of the utopian text, object or event (Moylan, 2008). Fredric Jameson takes this logic to its extreme, arguing that 'it is a mistake to approach Utopias with positive expectations, as though they offered visions of happy worlds, spaces of fulfillment and cooperation' (2005: 12). Accordingly, he argues that 'anti-anti-utopianism'

might constitute a more appropriate strategy than utopianism (2005: xvi); and it is worth spending some time unpacking his two-stage reading of utopian texts (and it is texts he is interested in: largely literary, but also filmic and televisual). The first, he suggests, occurs when a text necessarily fails to escape the conditions of its production: authors cannot write that which 'is not imaginable and not conceivable' (2009: 413), but might well be commonplace in the future. Here we might think of Bellamy and Morris' failure to escape the family form as a key means of social reproduction. From a Jamesonian perspective this is not because of their individual futurological or political failings, but because their imaginations are conditioned and constrained by their society (2005: 9). This is not necessarily a problem, either—Jameson expresses doubt about the efficacy of imagining societies that will not be realized within the lifetimes of their readers (2005: 286), and this needs to be taken into account when his claim that it is 'easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' is quoted as a simple lament for the lack of utopian visions. The second stage of this negation (the negation of the negation; or the second anti- in anti-anti-utopianism) comes when readers are estranged from their present and begin 'rattling on the bars' of necessity that keep them imprisoned in the present (2005: 233). The failure of the text to satisfactorily escape this present is held to further this process: that we cannot imagine the future as qualitatively different is another expression of the totalizing power of the present. Utopian texts, therefore, succeed by failing (2005: 192, 289–293). They do not help us to imagine *the future*, but they might help us to imagine imagining *a future*.

In Jameson, then, we find that the (failure) of the text's content (to convince) is central to its function. This claim is certainly not shared by all utopian studies scholars; and it is important to consider the role played by the content of a utopian text, event or object (what they represent or make present) and its form (how this (re)presentation occurs). Whilst Ruth Levitas argues that the utopian function is contingent and dialogical, for example, she is critical of an excess of openness in both the content of a utopian text and in its heuristic digestion— arguing that it hinders transformation. The task of the utopian, for her, is to realize utopia, rather than debate it (2013: 103). So although she acknowledges the importance of small, 'weak utopianisms' (my term) such as the colour blue; of critiquing the contradictions, inadequacies, silences and assumptions of utopian texts; and of the temporal and prefigurative utopianisms discussed below, she argues for a totalizing utopianism (which is absolutely not to be confused with a totalitarian utopianism)—the 'imaginary reconstitution of society' (IROS)—which connects these impulses to 'the specification of the content of the [large scale] good society' *and* the struggle required to realize it (2011: 227; cf. 1997: 78; 2013: 199, 217).

Like Levitas, Moylan (2008, 2014) also believes that the content of the society depicted is of considerable importance, but he argues that the presence of conflict (and so openness) within a fictional utopian world helps us both to imagine a world beyond that which exists *and* to engage more fully with the problems of this world. In *Demand the Impossible* (first published in 1986) he

develops his concept of the 'critical utopia' to refer to texts that preserve and transform the conventions of the literary utopia through such a critical openness (2014: 42); or perhaps even 'destroy utopia in order to save it' (2014: 45). In these works of fiction—Moylan dedicates chapters to Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, Ursula (K.) Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Samuel Delany's *Triton*—the struggle to create a new society is depicted, and the resultant 'good place' is imbued with a level of political dynamism such that the utopian function (with its level of contingency, democracy and debate) becomes internal to both the text and the utopian society depicted therein (cf. Moylan, 2014: xix). This is because authors of critical utopias acknowledge that there is no '"good" government, "good" state or "good" form of power . . . society can never be "good" in its own organization but only by virtue of the space for self-organization, autonomy, cooperation and voluntary exchange which that organization offers to individuals' (2014: 25). The utopian societies they depict are thus not perfect (in any sense of the word), but are beset by 'faults, inconsistencies, problems and even denials of the utopian impulse'; and exploitation and domination persist (2014: 43). Yet these flaws are challenged collectively—critical utopias focus on characters involved in political movements, struggles or organizations and so have more developed plots than are often associated with the utopian form (2014: 44–50). Frequently, these characters are 'socially other'—marginalized by oppressive power structures (2014: 50). Critical utopian texts depict, in other words, a utopianism within, against, beyond (and paradoxically for) the utopia in which they are set: 'utopia as struggle.' (2014: 49)

Literary form is important here: Moylan argues that this furthers the reflexivity of the critical utopia, with the 'unified, illusionary, and representational text of the more traditional utopia . . . broken open' through the fragmentation of narrative temporality (which is non-linear) and character (different perspectives are presented; versions of the same character appear in male and female form, or at different points in history) (2014: 45). He argues that, together with the politically dynamic content, this form enables the critical utopia to perform its function more effectively than the traditional utopia, but is insistent that the portrayal of utopia as a 'self-critical, open-ended process' does not entail a 'lack of confidence,' as Levitas (2011: 227) suggests; nor does it mean that utopia necessarily be reduced to the local scale: indeed, he argues it should work towards 'totalizing socio-political transformation (i.e., revolution)' (2014: xv). In this, Moylan rejects a conflation between the content of the utopia and the nature of utopianism: it is possible to portray a utopia that is only ambiguously utopian without collapsing utopianism into eternal debate.

Levitas and Moylan (the latter especially) both argue for connections between utopian texts that operate 'beyond' the present; that 'imaginarily reconstitute society' and practices in the present: for Moylan the critical utopia as literary form cannot be separated from the milieu of struggle— anti-racist, feminist, ecological, autonomist—in which they were produced. In his reading of *The Dispossessed* Simon Stow makes a similar argument,

although one focused on the reader, rather than the author. Drawing on the Ancient Greek use of *theoria,* he suggests that the utopian method should not simply 'construct . . . another world [that provides] lessons for our own, but rather . . . travel . . . between them and us[e] the perspectives gained from evaluating both realities in tandem with the other' (2005: 48). This travel, he notes, occurs at the level of narrative in *The Dispossessed,* with the anarchist world of Anarres functioning as the 'other world' and the statist Urras as an analogue for 1970s Earth. Shevek—the novel's main character—travels between these worlds, his journey (from anarchism to statism) being the inverse of Le Guin's intended reader, who finds familiar what he finds strange and *vice versa.*

Whilst Levitas and Moylan have fundamental disagreements, both believe that detailed descriptions of large-scale utopian societies that are impossible only because of current conditions increases the power of the utopian function. For others this is not the case. Stephen Duncombe, for example, returns to More's *Utopia* (and the letters More and his friends wrote around the text) to argue that the best utopian texts embody failure in their playfully ambiguous form. This is not represented through struggles against certain 'bad' features of the societies they depict (as in Moylan's critical utopias) but in the knowing winks to enlightened readers. In More's text the fact that that Utopia can be translated as 'no place,' that its capital city 'Amaurot' translates as 'phantom' and that its primary river 'Anyder' translates as 'without water' means that an alternative good place is simultaneously presented *and* destabilized. This latter operation is the key, however: it '*opens up* a space for the reader's imagination to wonder at what their vision of an alternative *someplace* might be.' As readers, we have to 'generate our own plans, *because* the plan offered up is untenable, unrealizable' (2013: 149, emphasis in original). A tenable, realizable plan would, by contrast, close down the future.

The relationship between the function of a utopian text, object or event and its form and/or content changes significantly when it is not a representation of a utopia. Here, emphasis shifts from the function of utopia to a function that is utopian. Kathi Weeks, for example, argues that 'directional demands'—such as the demand for Universal Basic Income—have a utopian function. They do not detail life in an alternative society but 'constitute a radical and potentially far-reaching change, generate critical distance, and stimulate the political imagination.' (2011: 221) Even more minimally, Ben Anderson (2002) argues that songs with no obvious utopian content—he draws on interviews with fans of David Gray and The Clash—might have a minimally utopian function of taking listeners out of their everyday existence.

Function-based approaches to utopia (whether concerned with the function of utopia or a function that is utopian) have exerted considerable influence on my own thinking on the utopian, and have helped me formulate many of the questions this work seeks to address (as well as some of the answers to these). To disavow them would be particularly foolish in that this work can itself be read as the result of a heuristic process in which I have engaged with particular

spatial practices (both 'real' and 'fictional,' which I seek to connect up). This book is, in that sense, evidence of the approach's efficacy.

Nonetheless, the methods used in function-based approaches differ from those I employ in the following two chapters, which are more concerned with the internal operations of utopias (fictional and real) than on their relationship with a reader: a pedagogical rather than hermeneutic approach, perhaps. I am concerned, in other words, with the spatiotemporal politics of utopia, or of thinking what utopia as place might be(come) than I am with developing a utopian method. In this sense, the set of problems I engage with here are slightly different from those of the theorists discussed above, albeit that I draw heavily on their work.

I am not opposed, then, to the function-based approach to utopia, but I do reject the *conflation of utopia with this function*, or with the positioning of 'utopia as method.' Levitas' work is perhaps the most prominent recent articulation of this position (2013, particularly p. 217), although it is a fairly widespread claim in utopian studies. Darko Suvin, for example, argues that utopia is 'a method rather than a state' and so something that 'cannot be realized or not realized—it can only be applied' (1979: 52); whilst Jameson states that utopia is 'an operation calculated to disclose the limits of our own imagination of the future' (utopia here collapsing into anti-anti-utopianism) (2009: 413). Such conflations of utopia with its method, or the labeling of utopia as a method leaves the analyst in the awkward position of having to make clear every time they use the term 'utopia' whether they are naming a 'good place' that catalyzes and/or results from this process, or this process itself. It also leaves us with no term to use to refer to real or fictional 'no-good places,' denying utopia its conceptual specificity. If utopia is a function that both critiques the present and moves beyond it, how does it differ from struggle; or, where that utopian is communist, from communism as a movement that makes the present impossible? In the case of Jameson, meanwhile, utopianism always remains that which is impossible (rather than, as I will argue, that which is impossible in certain conditions, but which struggles to make the present impossible): he erects a binary opposition between 'utopian aspiration' and 'political strategy' (2014).[4]

Utopia as Temporal Tendency

Many of the approaches discussed thus far are influenced to a considerable extent by the work of Ernst Bloch, a thinker and writer often credited with greatly expanding the field of utopian studies, most notably in his three volume *Principle of Hope* (published in English in 1986). He identifies utopian traces in an enormous number of cultural forms, including music, religion, architecture, medicine, sport, the commodity and daydreaming. In his work, however, the temporality discussed above—in which a utopian text catalyzes (anti-anti) utopianism—is reversed: his focus is on these forms as *expressions*, rather than catalysts, of utopian desire. They are material instantiations of 'impulses,' which are felt and utilized more powerfully by particular people who do not

appear to 'exist in the same Now' (1991: 97). Thus, the utopian scholar is required to undertake important 'detective' or 'interpretive' work, digging (like an 'archaeologist of the future,' to use Jameson's evocative and temporally uncanny phrase) into even the most 'noxious phenomena' of contemporary culture in order to identify and make sense of latent utopian impulses (Jameson, 2009: 415–416).

The temporally homeless subjects who feel and utilize these impulses feel the pull of 'not-yet'—the collective 'preconsciousness of what is to come,' which functions as 'the psychological birthplace of the New' (Bloch, 1986: 116). Thus, even in capitalism 'we live surrounded by possibility, not merely presence. In the prison of mere presence we could not even breathe' (1968: 281). This 'preconsciousness' is accompanied by a deeply materialist 'latency,' in which matter is not simply a 'mechanical lump' requiring an ideal form, but a 'process-reality' (1986: 197): 'Being which has not yet been delivered . . . the soil and substance in which our future, which is also its future, is delivered' (1986: 1371). Whilst this future-oriented matter can be glimpsed in the most banal commodities, it finds its expression most powerfully in the form of the 'concrete utopia': eruptions in the present where the 'novum'—the radically, unexpectedly new—can take form. The concrete utopia functions as the 'furthest reaching telescope,' which is 'necessary to see the real star of the earth' (1986: 315). Bloch contrasts this with idealist, 'immature' 'abstract utopia'— idealized depictions of a Good place which fail to detail the means by which such a state might be realized, although he does acknowledge that such forms keep the goal 'colourful and vivid' (1986: 620; cf. Levitas, 1997 for a critical reading of this distinction).

The concrete utopia is an important theoretical move inasmuch as it repositions utopia as a materialist form bound up with—rather than at a remove from—history: a 'seemingly paradoxical' move (1986: 146). In this, it refuses any simple distinction between utopia and utopianism; or between the spatial and the temporal. Bloch's likening it to a 'furthest reaching telescope' is instructive here: telescopes traditionally allow us to see across the reaches of space, but Bloch states that this one allows us instead to observe the best features of our own world. The telescope's temporal operation is inverted, meanwhile: they are time, as well as space, machines, showing us the nature of the universe as it was (billions of) light years ago (of course the term 'light years' reminds us of the co-constitution of space and time). Bloch's telescope, however, shows us the (potential) nature of the earth in the future, even as that future exists as potential in the present. This co-constitution of space and time is of great importance for the argument I develop in the following chapter, but Bloch positions concrete utopia in primarily temporal terms meaning that, as for those who adopt a function-based approach, he is largely uninterested in the *content* of concrete utopia: it is good inasmuch as it gestures towards a better future, but the nature of this good is never defined spatially. Indeed, utopia's primary power is negative for Bloch: it expresses our dissatisfaction with the present rather than providing us with a viable alternative.

Whilst Bloch's approach to utopia can be understood as prefigurative, this is very different from the prefiguration which informs a number of contemporary social movements (an understanding I discuss at greater length below), for Blochian prefiguration is the prefiguration of an end (partially) known in advance. He criticizes Henri Bergson's belief that 'everything ought to be new' for ensuring that 'everything remains just as it was': Bergson merely produces the novum shorn of the radical and unexpected—a novelty entirely compatible with commodity production. Such process may lack a goal but this merely ensures that 'everything is in fact pre-arranged . . . and is frozen into a formula.' The new is reduced 'to a merely endless, contentless zigzag . . . in which neither birth nor explosion occur, nor a venturing beyond, fruitful in terms of content, the previously Become occur.' There is no longer any 'trace of the onward' (1986: 140). Bloch associates this 'untrue change' with anarchism (1986: 280, 140).

To ensure that change is meaningful, then, Bloch—drawing on Hegel and the 'left Aristotelianism' of Avicenna and Averroës (1986: 207–208)—argues that matter is 'full of disposition *to something*, tendency *to*, latency *of something*' (1986: 16, emphasis added; cf. Levy, 1997). It moves from the present into a future something *and* evidences the future something reaching back into the present. This 'something' is explored more fully as what Bloch calls the 'Ultimum,' which 'represents the last, i.e. the highest newness, the repetition (the unremitting representedness of the tendency-goal in all progressively New) [as it] intensifies to the last, highest, most fundamental repetition: of identity' (1986: 203). Once reached, this will produce the world as '*heimat*,' a homeland to which we have never been but to which our lives have been oriented. (Here, then, we can compare the 'not-yet' to another Freudian concept: the *unheimlich*). Levitas (critically) refers to this as the 'teleological unfolding of what we have all "really" wanted since time immemorial' (Levitas, 1997: 79), whilst Moylan (1997) argues that this 'hypostatized' end conflicts with Bloch's commitment to process. It should also be noted that Bloch's insistence that this 'end' was dimly perceivable led him to largely uncritical support for Stalinism until well after Stalin's death and his direct experience of life in the GDR (Geoghegan, 1996: 17, 19, 24, 45, 163), and his association of concrete utopia with the marxism of the Soviet Union.

This understanding of utopia as a temporal process is taken up by a number of more recent theorists of utopia—in particular those concerned with practices of the structurally disadvantaged. In *Cruising Utopia: The There and Then of Queer Futurity*, José Esteban Muñoz positions Bloch as the thinker whose 'voice and logic most touches me, most animates my thinking' (2009: 2) and queers his approach, suggesting that 'queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present. Queerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that something is indeed missing' (2009: 1). Here, then, an understanding of oppressive power relations is added to Bloch's approach: the oppression, marginalization, exclusion and violence experienced by queers—particularly queers of

colour—combined with their creative capacity to invent new ways of living means that they 'do not exist in the same now.' At times, Muñoz explicitly associates this material anti-utopianism with the state, which 'understands the need to keep us from knowing ourselves, knowing our masses' (2009: 64).

Queers' refusal and/or inability to conform to norms of patriarchy, gender, sex, heteronormativity finds them particularly well placed to identify and produce utopian expressions that take them beyond the present (2009: 9). Muñoz's account can also be read intersectionally as he consistently notes that working class queers and queers of colour are particularly 'out of time.' Their utopianism is both generative (of alternative futures) and exhibits a 'radical negativity,' which functions as a 'resource' for this generation (2009: 12–13). Muñoz discusses a number of forms that this queer utopianism might be attached to, expressed in or generate, from the relatively 'mundane' (everyday commodity forms such as Coca-Cola) to public sex, performance art and punk rock.

For Muñoz, utopia is precisely this queer 'flux . . . temporal disorganization' (2009: 97). Queer reality has not-yet manifested itself fully, and utopia is the operation that performs this absence as much as its presence. This means that we can identify utopia in the present, but—like Bloch—it is recognizable only through an engagement with what it might become: utopia is a temporal operation and this temporality precedes its spatialization (an argument Muñoz adapts from Heidegger, 2009: 29).[5] Thus, we cannot truly know (queer) utopia given present conditions:

> we are not quite queer yet . . . queerness, what we will really know as queerness, does not yet exist. I suggest that holding queerness in a sort of ontologically humble state, under a conceptual grid in which we do not claim to always already know queerness in the world, potentially staves off the ossifying effects of neoliberal ideology and the degradation of politics brought about by representations of queerness in contemporary culture. . . . We cannot trust in the manifestations of what some people would call queerness in the present.
>
> (2009: 22)

It is not clear whether this queer utopia-as-temporal-potential is eternal, which is to say that utopia will remain partly absent under any and all historical conditions, or whether it might be possible to realize utopia fully if we can move beyond our current way of producing, ordering and distributing things (Muñoz's work is avowedly, if not conventionally, marxist). If it is the latter, Muñoz does not provide this space-time with a name: his work has no '*Ultimum*,' no '*heimat*'; although he does refer to 'the future' as a 'spatial and temporal destination' that enacts a propulsion 'we must give in to' (2009: 185).

Whilst Muñoz uses utopia to refer to operations in the present, Susan McManus—in her reworking of Bloch through post-Spinozan affect theory—avoids the term, talking instead of the presence of 'utopian affective agency' in this (and any) world. This, she notes, is co-produced by both human and

more-than-human subjects, meaning that the traditionally 'privileged markers of agency' in political theory, and which are often mobilized in approaches to the utopian—'autonomy, intentionality, rationality, and so on—are off the mark.' Rather, 'all sorts of bodies (including humans) [are] always-already relational, and affects are those forces . . . that traverse and transform those bodies.' Utopian affects, she argues, are those that mobilize cautious, pessimistic, Blochian hope (as distinct from a confidence or optimism): an 'anticipatory orientation [that] is not necessarily linked up with promise or fulfillment.' This opens up the future as a site of possibility but remains cautiously fearful because it understands that any future it helps realize will not be enough and will, on some level, fail. They circulate through the 'organization, and differing "resonances" of bodies' in physical proximity (such as on a protest)—and do not disavow fear but rather mobilize it. However, McManus cautions against the over-determination of hope 'in particular agential orientations': not least because of capitalism's ability to capture and manipulate hope (2011: muse.jhu.edu).

There is much of value in these works. Moving away from a focus on texts that catalyze utopia, they allow us to identify the utopian in the present. Muñoz helpfully identifies this with subjects whose identities exist at the intersection of creativity and oppression, bringing questions of power and identity into play. They help us to understand that utopia is not simply a spatial operation, but a temporal one as well. However, in privileging temporality Bloch orients it to an end of history that, confusingly, he does not name utopia but '*heimat*,' whilst Muñoz's privileging of utopia's negative function without this eschatological redemption means that whilst utopia shakes the foundations of our (and presumably any) present, it is not something that can be positively realized at the level of spatial or temporal totality. It also becomes difficult to think about how critique might be *internal* to utopia, rather than existing in the relationship between utopia and the dystopian totality that it is embedded within. Utopia is also conflated with 'queerness' such that sometimes it is difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. One is rather left wondering precisely what the concept of utopia adds to Muñoz's politics: how would they be different, for example, if he spoke only of 'queerness'?

McManus, meanwhile, brings the utopian into dialogue with the kinds of affect theory mobilized in this book, pushing Bloch's already cautious work even further from banal neoliberal mobilizations of hope. In suggesting that there is matter in this world from which the utopian can be constructed she moves closer to the kind of spatial materiality explored in the following chapter. Yet whilst her worry about 'over-determining' forms of organization where utopian affect might circulate is understandable—and should certainly act as a break on any hasty celebrations of the (potentially) utopian forms discussed in the following chapters—it ends up leaving the utopian shorn of utopia, and nor is it clear precisely what utopianism might refer to. With its cautious attention to ambiguous affective states—of particular relevance for the discussion in Chapter Five—McManus is in one sense far from the ecstatic, nihilistic

escapism of the Mephi, but there is a similar anti-anti-utopianism at play here: the utopian, it seems, knows no utopia.

The feminist utopian scholars Angelika Bammer and Lucy Sargisson explicitly outline such a politics in *Partial Visions: Feminism and Utopianism in the 1970s* and *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*, respectively. They identify a utopian impulse to feminist literature and philosophy from the 1970s (with Sargisson's book also covering the period up to 1990). Where Muñoz positions queers as subjects who have to live out-of-time in order to realize their queerness, Bammer and Sargisson suggest that women constitute a marginalized 'Other [who] is potentially the most utopian' (Bammer, 1991: 3–4); although 'woman' here does not refer to an essential category—both argue that a non-essential 'femininity' can work to overcome patriarchal, 'logocentric' order, which seeks closure. It is not possible to create a 'Good Life' for all, Sargisson suggests: instead we must remain open to 'change, struggle and difference . . . a universalist theory of utopia, whilst apparently giving an emancipatory vision, suppresses the very idea of dissent and the possibility of the existence of other subjective truths in this privileging of sameness' (Sargisson, 1996: 121).

This non-universalist utopianism is associated with post-structuralist feminism's engagements with difference and its openness to new forms of language, living and relating. Where Muñoz is a little ambiguous about whether queerness will be eternally 'out of the world' or might find full expression under different social conditions, Sargisson and Bammer are clear that this feminine/feminist utopianism is one of eternal process and thus—as Bammer states—we should 'replace the idea of "a utopia" as something fixed, a form to be fleshed out, with the idea of "the utopian" as an *approach toward*, a movement beyond set limits into the realm of the not-yet-set' (1991: 7). This, she says, moves us from a state of rest to a state of action (1991: 126; cf. 147). Here, then, utopia is associated with stasis—an implicit repetition of the claim that time is opposed to utopia (and, perhaps particularly, vice versa). Sargisson does not make this argument quite so explicitly, but it is clear throughout that her focus is on utopia*nism* (and sometimes 'the utopian') rather than utopia, an approach repeated in her more recent *Fool's Gold: Utopianism in the Twenty-First Century* (2012). Both thinkers do briefly refer to the spatial—Sargisson referring to 'the discovery or creation of a space in which radically different relations to the other can be conceived' (1996: 121; cf. Bammer, 1991: 145)—but is clear that this space can only ever be conceptual, and Sargisson names it 'utopian' rather than utopia because it 'does not represent closure' (1996: 121).

This relocation of utopia from the spatial to the temporal is also found in recent scholarship on postcolonial utopianisms. Echoing my arguments about particular historical subjects understanding place itself as dystopian, Corina Kesler posits

> a causal relationship between the conditions of oppression and expressions of utopia. Roughly: the more a people, culture and/or ethnicity experience physical space as a site of political, cultural and literal encroachment, the

more that distinct culture's utopian ideas tend to appear in non-spatial, specifically, temporal formations.

(2012: 88)

Bill Ashcroft, meanwhile, argues that as a result of Western utopianism's role in the construction of the nation state and colonialism, postcolonialism creates 'a utopianism almost completely devoid of utopias' (2009: 8). Its 'utopian impulse . . . is not to construct a place,' and utopia is 'a certain kind of praxis rather than a specific mode of representation' (2009: 16). Elsewhere—drawing heavily on Bloch—he argues that '[f]or postcolonialism . . . Utopia is no longer a place but the spirit of hope itself, the essence of desire for a better world' (2012: 2; cf Jain, 2012).

In different ways, then, these theorists of queer, feminist and postcolonial utopia(nism) associate space and place with stasis, meaning that utopia is either relocated from space into time or rejected in favour of utopianism or the utopian. This is an understandable response to those who would position utopia as a totalitarian space that seeks to shut down temporality, and a productive way for marginalized and oppressed subjects to repurpose utopia for their own ends. I am happy to follow Sargisson in suggesting that these positions may constitute a utopianism in that they seek to go beyond that which exists in favour of an (unrepresented and unrepresentable) world to come, but again I am wary about conflating this utopia*nism* with utop*ia* or advocating a utopianism without utopia.

Spatiotemporal Utopianism

The approaches to utopia outlined thus far position it as a perfect place, downplay the importance of space in favour of a focus on utopia's function (sometimes describing that function as utopia) or view utopia as a temporal process. I have argued that the first of these approaches is politically intolerable and that function and temporal approaches leave it difficult to distinguish utopia from radical thought more broadly; although I have suggested that there are a number of important contextual factors to be taken into account when considering *why* these particular understandings of utopia have developed. Nonetheless, I suggest that despite moving the concept of utopia away from a crass (and politically disturbing) association with perfection, they lose much of its conceptual specificity, which stems from its spatiality. In various ways, I have argued, utopia comes to function as a synonym for communism, queerness, feminism, struggle, utopianism and—as I shall argue shortly—prefiguration. I am all for communism, queerness, feminism, struggle, utopianism and prefiguration; but I am also for utopia, and they are not quite the same thing. Even where this blurring does not occur, approaches that focus on utopia's function necessarily focus on the relationship between a utopian text, object or event and someone external to it. In this, the internal operations of the utopian text, object or event are only of secondary importance (they are relevant inasmuch as they influence the text, object or event's function, but not in their own right).

David Harvey outlines a similar concern in *Spaces of Hope*. Though sympathetic to utopian critics of blueprint utopianism, he notes that 'the effect, unfortunately, is to leave the actual spaces of any alternative frustratingly undefined' (2000: 183). Indeed, this is a frustration that I have outlined with approaches to utopia that define it as a process; or eschew utopia in favour of utopianism or 'the utopian.' Harvey, however, sees this as a *necessary* consequence of favouring openness, arguing that 'to materialize a space is to engage with closure (however temporary) which is an authoritarian act' (2000: 183, cf. 188). He suggests that all utopian projects illustrate this and so calls for a dialectical 'spatiotemporal utopianism.' At one point he comes close to thinking space and time together, arguing that much utopian fiction—the texts Moylan refers to as 'critical utopias'—depict utopian 'societies and spatialities . . . shaped by continuous processes of struggle (2000: 189), yet ultimately he keeps space (utopia) and time (utopianism) separate from one another, noting that the dialectic offers us 'either/or' not 'both/and' (2000: 196). Thus, materialized spatial utopias must constantly be confronted with temporal, processual utopianism: a stop-start utopianism akin to Wilde's utopians who, on reaching (a) utopia, find it unsatisfactory and so set off for another one.

Harvey is, of course, by no means the only utopian studies scholar concerned with the internal operation of utopias and here I want to outline a third broad approach within utopian studies dedicated to exploring the internal operations of utopian spaces: engagements with their content rather than their function on an external 'reader.' In some instances, creating new and ostensibly 'good' forms of living is the primary purpose of the spatial practices in question (as in intentional communities); in others it may be secondary to some other purpose, or may not even be an explicit purpose at all (the performance of music in a symphony orchestra); and on other occasions these functions may not be quite so distinct (the Occupy movement, for example, which often explicitly positioned its camps as prefigurations of a form to come as much as it positioned them as protests). Some of these practices are temporally totalizing, which is to say that those who partake in them spend a significant proportion of their lives in them (as in an intentional community); whilst others are occasional (as with an orchestra) or one-offs (as with a protest, although clearly different protests can be linked).

Analysis of more self-consciously, long-term utopian experiments can be found in the work of Laurence Davis (2012), who engages with the 'grounded utopias' produced by social movement struggles and organization, with the term 'grounded' emphasizing both their spatial nature and the fact that they exist in the here-and-now rather than in a 'transcendent' beyond. Uri Gordon, meanwhile, describes 'anarchist utopias' as 'places created by the actions of individuals and communities taking history into their own hands' (2009a: 260). Importantly, 'place' here is not synonymous with closure, for Gordon and Davis both subscribe to an anarchist politics of prefigurative becoming. A similar commitment to openness is adopted by Rhiannon Firth in her study of utopian communities, which draws heavily on Sargisson's feminist utopianism

and Moylan's concept of the critical utopia to position these as 'good places' that are open to change and conflict over time (Firth, 2012). Here, then, the claim that the spatial materialization of a utopia necessarily results in a closing down of utopianism as social process is rejected. The materialization of a utopia does, of course, 'close down' certain options—if we take Davis' example of the Zapatistas, it 'closes down' the possibility of neoliberal statism—but this is a closing down in relation to the external world: the utopia's *internal* politics can remain constituted by conflict, struggle and change.

Others pay attention to spatial forms that are not (primarily) seeking to create utopian space, and which are more temporary or transient in their formation. Ruth Levitas, for example, presents the symphony orchestra as a utopian form, although she is particularly interested in experiments where the orchestra is (ostensibly) tied to the promotion of utopian ideals beyond its immediate spatiality, citing the Venezuelan youth orchestra El Sistema and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (2013: 58–59; see Beckles-Willson, 2009 and Baker, 2014 for vital critiques of these projects; and Bell, 2012: 126–132 for an argument that the symphony orchestra in fact embodies a dystopian form of utopianism). And despite his privileging of temporality over spatiality, Muñoz's analyses of queer public sex and other 'mass gatherings' (from performance art 'happenings' to queer riots) provide insight into how we might think of utopia as prefigurative spatial praxis. Of particular interest here given this book's interest in the affective are how he defines them as performative acts in which contact between queer (utopian) subjects amplifies individual and collective queerness. Drawing on C.L.R. James, he calls this a 'future in the present': an 'anticipatory illumination of a queer world, a sign of an actually existing queer reality, a kernel of political possibility within a stultifying heterosexual present' (2009: 49).

Explicit claims to utopia are perhaps the exception rather than the rule even among those engaging with spatial practices, however; and many take a similar path to Bammer and Sargisson, rejecting utopia in favour of utopianism. Valérie Fournier, for example, uses 'utopianism rather than "utopia" to emphasize movement over static visions of a better order' (2002: 192); a move referenced (and implicitly, although inconsistently, adopted) by Ruth Kinna (2009: 221). Judith Suissa (2009), meanwhile, outlines an 'anarchist utopianism' in her analysis of anarchist schools—which are explicitly figured as 'spaces'—but she does not call these utopias and is hostile to the term, again associating it with closure. Others who engage with particular practices are happy to use 'utopia' but are closer to the Blochian approach in that they position it temporally rather than spatially. Andy Robinson and Simon Tormey, for example, state that '[a]t the most basic level, utopia is not a particular space or place but a movement or flow which in turn may create new spatial possibilities' (2009: 164).

Here, 'utopia' functions as a form of 'prefiguration,' as the term is used in contemporary social movement politics (Gordon, 2008). Strictly speaking, this might be thought of as a 'meta-prefiguration' in which the task of 'building a new world in the shell of the old'—to paraphrase the Preamble of the

International Workers of the World—is *permanent*. The 'new world' can never be reached as a utopia of perfection but must *continually* be made and remade, both because new forms of living and relating will develop; and because new forms of domination will arise. There are obvious similarities with Moylan's concept of the 'critical utopia' here, particularly when this is (mis)applied as a spatial category rather than a specifically literary form. Such prefiguration is driven by struggle and organization in the present rather than by a transcendent vision of the Good place yet to come. There is neither the privileging of means nor ends as in deontological and consequentialist ethics, but rather their convergence (Franks, 2006: 94–114). It is, at its most powerful, an antihylomorphism, constituting a hopeful politics focused on immanent, material creativity; *and* a hyper-pessimism (Foucault, 1997: 256) focused on the impossibility of finding any 'outside' to domination (a subjectivity produced and experienced by Muñoz's queers, for example).

Given the politics at play here it is easy to see the attraction of utopianism without utopia; or of rethinking utopia so that it refers to prefiguration rather than the destination being prefigured, which cannot be determined in advance. The refusal to separate means and ends is mirrored in the refusal to separate utopianism and utopia. I am extremely sympathetic to the politics of these arguments but cannot help but feel that they too eradicate the conceptual specificity of utopia as a place. What does utopia add to a politics of prefiguration if it cannot be distinguished from this prefiguration? The argument that I develop throughout the rest of this book is an attempt to think through this problem: what (or where) might *utopia* be for an immanent, prefigurative, antihylomorphic politics? How might the relationship between temporality and spatiality; and between utopianism and utopia be conceived?

Defining Utopia and Utopianism

The argument that I take forwards is that it is utopia's spatiality which provides it with its conceptual specificity, and so I use the term to refer to places (re)produced in accordance with a particular understanding of the good, and where the 'no' of utopia's etymology also plays an important role. The task, then, must be to determine quite what is meant by 'good,' 'place' and 'no'; and to think through how they relate. Utopianism can thus refer either to spatial practice that (re)produces such utopias; or to a set of beliefs that advocates the (re)production of utopia. I will also use the term utopia(nism) to refer to the intra-actions between utopia and utopia(nism), and to stress their imbrication.

Yet this does not tell us about the political content of utopia(nism), and it is to this question that I now turn: how could we think of utopia as a place producing and (re)produced by the good without succumbing to a colonial, statist, hylomorphism? Is it possible, *contra* Harvey, to materialize good place without succumbing to the closure and authoritarianism (whilst closing off those undesirable aspects of the world in which we currently live)? Can utopia(nism) avoid reproducing settler colonialism? Where might utopias be within our

world, and how do these connect to utopias positioned beyond it? How do we avoid utopia's co-option by our world? It is these questions that the rest of the book will seek to address.

Notes

1. I am wary of the intent and function of 'overviews,' although wide-ranging surveys of a field can certainly be useful for identifying trends, problems, exclusions and gaps in a field. Ruth Levitas' *The Concept of Utopia* (1990) is perhaps the closest that utopian studies has in this regard, but it is now twenty-five years old and so predates a number of recent concerns in the field.
2. Other transhumanist utopianisms stress that conflict and struggle would remain even after the physical limits of the human body are overcome. (Prażmo, 2016).
3. Kumar is a little ambiguous here. In *Utopianism*, he argues that utopia should be considered a 'species' of science fiction (1991: 20) and he often writes as if progress is central to all utopias. Yet at other times he acknowledges that not all utopias are produced by permanent scientific and technological change. In *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* he argues that Campanella's *City of the Sun* (published in 1602) was the first utopian text 'to make science and scientific research central to its vision,' though states that it was 'undoubtedly [Bacon's 1624] *New Atlantis* which was most influential in fixing the association between science and utopia.' (1987: 30) There is thus slippage between the titular 'utopia . . . in modern times' and utopia more broadly (as there is between English utopias between 1516 and 1700 and utopia more broadly in Davis' work).
4. This comes in a talk (seemingly) advocating universal conscription as the only 'viable' form of utopianism in the US. I have not explored this here, largely because the aim of the talk remains impenetrable to me. It has, however, recently been published as an essay, complete with critical responses from a range of political theorists (Jameson, 2016): I can only hope I am able to interpret the written words more clearly!
5. Elsewhere, Muñoz argues that utopia is spatial as well as temporal (2009: 99), but his analysis consistently privileges its temporal dimensions over its spatiality. Indeed, space is sometimes implicitly associated with the present and/or the static, as when he writes that '[t]he time of the past helps mount a critique of the space of the present' (2009: 116).

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4   Rethinking the Good Place

Introduction: Within, against and beyond

In this chapter, I consider what it might mean to think of utopia as a place by drawing on approaches that position place as a dynamic, intra-active form. This, I suggest, enables us to think of a materialized utopia without succumbing to closure. From this, I think through how these intra-actions might be 'good,' inasmuch as they increase the capacities of bodies to affect and be affected. This allows me to develop an understanding of utopia as a place (re)produced by and (re)producing such good intra-actions (cf. Stavrides, 2016: 7). The operation of any such utopia (potentially, at least) creates 'joy,' understood as the embodied experience of increasing capacities to affect and be affected. Unlike the happiness of the control society, however, this 'joy' is not the product of a magical voluntarism: it cannot be willed up from a change in our 'inner attitudes' but is relational, being produced through intra-actions with a variety of other bodies. Nor, as the next chapter argues, should it be theorized apart from negative affects: anger and anxiety in particular. I would thus urge that readers not read this chapter in isolation from Chapter Five: if I have been successful, they should intra-act in such a way that they modify, struggle against and strengthen one another, providing some of the ambiguous consistency that constitutes utopia as I describe it. A further note to readers is that I switch modes in this chapter such that I use the term 'utopia' (and related terms) to refer to the approach I am developing here. My claim is not that this is the only form of utopianism, as previous chapters should make clear. Speaking normatively, rather than analytically, however, I can say that it is the only form of utopianism I can recommend as utopian; and it is in this sense that I use the term from here on.

Unpacking the operation of this good place is undertaken through rethinking concepts central to political theory—'power,' 'freedom' and 'democracy,' in keeping with Davina Cooper's (2014) claim that utopias provide space from which such concepts can be rethought. These, I suggest, constitute what Freeden calls 'adjacent concepts,' which serve to flesh out the meaning of utopia's core, constituent terms (Freeden, 1996: 77). In order to illustrate this more fully, I theorize in part from small-scale examples of such 'good' place-making within the here-and-now in the form of musical improvisation and radical experiments in education, although my claim is that these are also partially

beyond (and should operate against) the here-and-now, and so they can only ever be ambiguously understood as being 'within' it. This 'beyondness' may be temporal, which is to say that these utopias actualize spatial formations that, to draw on Bloch, are 'not-yet' enacted more broadly; and it may be spatial, which is to say that they operate in spaces that have a degree of autonomy from capitalist social relations.

Utopian Praxis

There are, of course, a myriad of practices that I could have chosen to illustrate the operation of utopianism: musical improvisation and radical education are two that I have particular familiarity with and so feel I can 'articulate' at least partly from within, rather than outside. Given that my argument here is that utopian studies should think about the internal operations of utopias as well as their impact on those outside of them, this seems important. Yet it should also be noted that my experiences are not universal, nor do I seek to claim any particular 'authenticity': as I argue below, the articulation of any given place is partial. Furthermore, it is important to heed Susan McManus' call not to over-determine particular forms of organization as utopian in and of themselves, and so my argument is not that these musical and improvisation and radical experiments in education always-already create utopias (this will become particularly clear in the following chapter).

I do not wish to offer in-depth descriptions of these forms here: they are broad practices that vary enormously according to context, and which—in keeping with the utopianism I develop here—are ever changing; and a clear enough description will hopefully emerge as I advance my argument. Some brief words of introduction will, nonetheless, be useful for readers. Broadly speaking, musical improvisation names practices of 'musicking' (Small, 1998) that develop immanently, rather than to realize a predetermined 'work.' It is often opposed to composition, although I do not follow this distinction here: improvisers often understand their practice as a form of composition (Oliveros, 2016; Schuiling, 2016); non-musical uses of the term 'composition,' which refer to 'the action of putting together or combining' or 'the forming (of anything) by combination of various elements, parts, or ingredients' (oed.com) clearly cover improvisation; and even the most detailed musical score does not fix all aspects of a musical performance, leaving spaces and times—however miniscule—for improvisation to occur. Thus, whilst I only draw directly on the work of musicians commonly associated with 'improvisation' as it is widely understood, this should not be taken to mean that the experiences I engage with do not occur in other forms of musicking.[1]

I am by no means the first person to identify a utopian aspect to musical improvisation. John Szwed, for example, positions it as a practice forging ahead of political theory, arguing:

> The esthetics of jazz demand that a musician play with complete original-ity, with an assertion of his own musical individuality. . . . At the same time

jazz requires that musicians be able to merge their unique voices in the totalizing, collective improvisations of polyphony and heterophony. The implications of this esthetic are profound and more than vaguely threatening, for no political system has yet been devised with social principles which reward maximal individualism within the framework of spontaneous egalitarian interaction.

(2005: 187)

A similar claim is made by Daniel Fischlin, Ajay Heble and George Lipsitz, for whom improvisation 'calls into being an experimental, alternative community in which individualism does not have to degenerate into selfishness and where collectivity does not have to dissolve into conformity' (Fischlin et al., 2013: xiii). Here, already, we can see that the supposed binary opposition between the individual and the collective, which has sustained so much utopianism and anti-utopianism, is undone; a feature that Christopher Small also identifies and associates with anarchism (1987: 307). Yet we can also identify dangers here, with Fischlin et al. noting that improvisation does not *have* to dissolve into selfishness and/or conformity: a clear warning that it *can* do. Indeed, I doubt that anyone who has ever improvised has not, on occasion, found it to be a thoroughly unpleasant experience; and I discuss some of the difficulties associated with improvisation in the following chapter. Despite these, however, a number of critics and improvisers have positioned it as a (potentially) utopian practice (Van Hove in Brennan, 2001 *Cox & Warner, 2002*: 251–252; *Lewis, 2008*: xii; Parker in Lee, 2010 *Hegarty, 2012*; Harper, 2010).[2] Given that jazz is the form of music perhaps most associated with free improvisation, it is also of vital importance to take the racial politics of musical improvisation into account. Much improvisation is, after all, undertaken as an explicitly political expression of Black creative power that draws on experiences of white supremacy and anti-blackness: a sonic example of what Cedric J. Robinson (2000) refers to as 'the black radical tradition' (Lock, 1999; Moten, 2003; Lewis, 2008; Carles & Comolli, 2015). Improvisation has, of course, also been used as a form of creative expression from a range of marginalized and oppressed positions, including poverty (Lewis, 2008); femininity (Myers, 2002; Oliveros, 2004; Tucker, 2004) and queerness (Smith, 2004; Tucker, 2008), although these are not—of course—mutually exclusive (Lewis, 2008).

The radical experiments in education I reference, meanwhile, are premised on the understanding that 'knowledge' is not simply a 'thing' to be transferred from a knower (the teacher) to those who do not know (students or pupils), but rather is a dynamic form that is (re)produced and changed through pedagogic intra-actions. These approaches go by a number of overlapping and intra-secting names, although there are of course some tensions and disagreements within the field.[3] I do not outline these disagreements but draw selectively from these approaches to articulate how the 'classroom' or 'school' can be (re) produced as 'good place.' These spaces may be in the formal education system or outside it: they may even not be discrete spaces separated from the rest of

the society in which they are situated. My interest, then, is primarily (although not exclusively) in the configuration of the educational space rather than in the role this education plays in struggle more broadly.

As with improvisation, such forms of education are frequently associated with—and are utilized (or perhaps 'produced') by—anarchists (Antliff, 2007; Armaline, 2009; Haworth, 2012) and variously heterodox marxisms (Giroux, 2011; Amsler, 2015; Motta, 2015). Given their potential for organizing around forms of knowledge excluded from traditional educational forms, they have also proved productive for a wide variety of marginalized, oppressed and colonized subjects, including Black people and people of colour (hooks, 1994; Zeus, 2002; Boler & Zembylas, 2003); queers and gender non-conforming subjects (Jones & Calafell, 2012); and Indigenous peoples and peasants (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Grande, 2015; Motta, 2015).

Again, these forms of education are often understood as forms of utopianism, and there is a stronger engagement with utopian studies here than there is with musical improvisation. Judith Suissa, as I noted in the previous chapter, talks of the classrooms of anarchist experiments in education as utopian but is opposed to the term utopia, whilst Mark Coté, Richard J. F. Day and Greig de Peuter talk of anarchist education as a form of 'immanent utopia' (Coté et al., 2007). This, they state, is utopia 'not as a place we might reach but . . . an ongoing process of becoming . . . both a critical attitude towards the present and a political commitment to experiment in transfiguring the coordinates of our historical moment' (2007: 15–16). A similar understanding of utopia informs the work of the radical educator Paulo Freire, who was heavily influenced by Bloch's concept of the concrete utopia (2004: 77, 1985: 81–82; cf. Giroux & McLaren, 1997). There are obvious overlaps here with those approaches in utopian studies which either downplay utopia in favour of utopianism or the utopian, or which position utopia as a temporal form; an interesting contrast with discussions of musical improvisation's radical political potential, which frames it more in terms of the spatial relations of musicians.

Drawing on the utopian methods outlined by Ruth Levitas and Tom Moylan in which struggle in the present connects with a totalizing 'imaginary reconstitution of society,' I trace a link from these practices within and against the here-and-now to a larger scale place beyond it: through a reading of the 'ambiguously' utopian moon Anarres[4] in Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed,* founded by a group of anarcho-communists from the planet Urras, around which Anarres orbits. My focus remains on spatial practice, however: I am interested in the (re)production of Anarres rather than the novel's effect on a reader. Reading Anarres in this way connects utopianism within (and against) the here-and-now to that which operates beyond it, but this should not be interpreted in a teleological manner: Anarres is not a blueprint to which utopianism in our world should orient itself, nor some kind of *Ultimum* to which it is necessarily unfolding. To amplify this, I read Anarres alongside—rather than apart from—musical improvisation and radical education. Indeed, inasmuch as we engage with Anarres in the here-and-now, it—or at least *The*

Dispossessed—can be thought of as an active body in a utopianism of the here-and-now. In this there are parallels with Simon Stow's use of *theoria*, as discussed in the previous chapter, though with two key differences: firstly, the utopian beyond is connected with utopian—rather than dystopian—tendencies in our present; and secondly our present is figured through material practices rather than through a fictional representation. I travel not between (ambiguously utopian) Anarres and (ambiguously dystopian) Urras, but between (ambiguously utopian) Anarres and (ambiguously utopian) places within and against our here-and-now.

Re-Placing Utopia

Arguing that utopia should be understood as a place is all well and good but produces as many questions as it answers. What is meant by place? What is a 'good place,' and where does 'no' come in? How do the adjacent concepts that help make up any given utopianism (re)produce place? Answers to such questions are not helped by the fact that 'place' is a notoriously difficult concept to define. It is closely related to space, but the (existence of a) boundary between them is debated; and one theorist's 'space' is another's 'place' (just as, in many definitions, one person's space is another's place).

Authentic Place

Given this, it is perhaps useful to begin with the definition offered by the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, which corresponds closely to colloquial uses of the term. For him, place refers to differentiated space—space that we 'know' and 'endow with value' (1977: 6). It is deeply affective: this value is 'felt' (1977: 23) and may even lead to a quasi-utopian 'topophilia': a term he uses to refer to 'affective bond[s] between people and place' (1974: 4). Such bonds emerge because places provide us with 'security and stability,' are (ideally) free from conflict and are to be contrasted with (but cannot be understood apart from) the 'openness, freedom and threat of space.' Here, place takes on the static, timeless quality that a number of definitions of utopia implicitly associate with the spatial more broadly, whilst space is understood to permit change: 'if we think of space as that which allows movement,' writes Tuan, 'then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place' (1977: 6).

It is the fear that these pauses may become permanent which informs the topophilia of much anti-utopianism and anti-anti-utopianism; and a similar understanding of space that provides solace for Kabakov's Man, the Mephi and Zamyatin's Scythians. Yet as I noted in Chapter One, contemporary dystopias of control and exclusion are frequently experienced not through the overbearing power of place but are strangely placeless. If utopianism organizes around a romantic topophilia in which place is always-already the bearer of meaning

and community, then it risks complicity with, rather than opposition to, the world as it is. Utopians need a suitably dynamic understanding of place.

Intra-Active Place

Whilst Yasser Elsheshtawy's reading of *Code 46* articulates the film's problematic romanticism, his extrapolations from it—in which he links the film's portrayal of Jebel Ali to spatial practices in the Satwa area of Dubai—point to an understanding of place grounded in an attention to bottom-up spatial practices and political struggle. His representation of Satwa contrasts with the ahistorical presentation of Jebel Ali in *Code 46*, as is apparent in this detailed description:

> The district is nestled in the shadows of Dubai's skyscrapers on Sheikh Zayed Road, and was developed in the late 1960s by Sheikh Rashid, the city's previous ruler, to provide decent housing for the local population on identical 60 x 60 foot plots. Nationals eventually moved to outlying suburbs in the 1970s and 80s, and turned their houses over to low income workers. Today these houses are mostly occupied by people from the Indian subcontinent, but they are also home to a sizeable population of Arabs and, interestingly, Bidoon, who are stateless people, immigrants from the 1970s who for various reasons did not apply for citizenship when the United Arab Emirates was formed in 1971. They and their descendants are without official papers—papelles—and thus are deprived of various privileges allotted to Emiratis. Many Bidoon hail from Iran and belong to the Shiite sect, further adding to their marginalization. Some symbols of their presence exist, such as yellow flags indicating political allegiance to Shiite factions in Lebanon, as well as the presence of Husseiniyas, sites of religious celebrations.
>
> (2011: 27)

This is a rich, thick and historicized description, in keeping with Elsheshtawy's commitment to challenging (mis)conceptions of Dubai as a place solely catering to elites (Elsheshtawy, 2014). Satwa here is shown as a dynamic place (re)produced through self-organized, bottom-up practice, its character the result of connections with global flows and internal intra-actions: the repurposing of outdoor space into semi-public living 'rooms' complete with sofas; the drying of laundry on streets; graffiti; and a variety of communal gatherings, including those in the Iftar tents established during Ramadan to provide Muslims with a collective space in which to break their fast (2011: 27).

Despite (or perhaps because of) this communal liveliness, Satwa is frequently understood as a space of disorder and criminality, features often blamed on racially othered 'illegal' immigrants. Such a representation fed into a government sponsored redevelopment plan in 2008, which would have seen the area bulldozed and replaced with a luxury development projected to cost

almost USD100 billion. This was supported by a particularly 'hygienist' form of hylomorphism in which self-organized bodies are figured as matter out of place—something common to revanchist urban discourses around gentrification (Latour, 1993: 21; Almandoz, 2000; Huse, 2014: 69; Vasudevan, 2015: 45)—and is positioned by Elsheshtawy as a flawed form of top-down utopianism. Many residents were evicted or ordered to leave their homes (and compensated poorly) and some demolition work began in 2009. This was, however, halted by the economic downturn (Elsheshtawy, 2011: 28).

Here, Satwa is not understood to offer a readymade 'outside' to dystopian capitalism, but rather functions as a dynamic place of struggle and resistance. It is (re)produced through a variety of place-making processes that *make place through their taking place*.[5] These may pay heed to particular traditions, but they are not grounded in an understanding of place as a stable centre of meaning; and here I want to consider what 'place' might mean in such contexts. In so doing I do not want to completely leave Tuan behind: place is still 'space made meaningful,' but this meaning is no longer stable. Rather, it is produced in the dynamic relations between the bodies—human, non-human and more-than-human—that compose space. The meaning that differentiates place from space is thus produced immanently: there is no need to hylomorphically reshape space into place in order to produce meaning (and thus to produce a 'Good place'), because space itself is rich with meaning.

Such an understanding resonates with a variety of figures—contemporary and historical; theoretical and practical—who challenge understandings of 'space' as a static, inert, feminized 'container' of matter that enables movement but has no form. Instead, they argue that space is produced through the inter-relation and interaction of human and/or nonhuman affects, discourses, materials and bodies (Leibniz in Alexander, eds., 1956; Soja, 1989; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994, 2005; Sofia, 2000; Wiley, 2005; Barad, 2007; Coulthard, 2010; Tally, 2013). Reminding ourselves of the claims made by Karen Barad we can say that these are in fact *intra*-relations and *intra*-actions, whose objects (including space) do not pre-exist these comings together as stable, self-identical entities but are (re)produced through their coming together (2007: 33). These intra-actions are never entirely contained by space either, but include space's relations with its broader milieu: with objects, bodies and subjects that enter and leave it (think how OneState changes for D-503 when the pollen blows over the Green Wall). On this understanding, space is never simply an emptiness in which the topophobic subject can lose itself; nor an empty container for the hylomorphic utopian to fill with a new world.

Space and Place

If space is always-already rich with relations (and thus meaning), then any clear-cut distinction between space and place must be complicated, and many geographers use the terms interchangeably (see Crouch, 2010, for example). Marcus Doel suggests the neologism 'splace' to draw attention to this (1999: 9),

but here I want to follow Doreen Massey, for whom place should be understood 'as a particular articulation of . . . relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings' (1994: 5). In this, space is transformed into place when it is 'articulated,' a (presumably carefully chosen) term that lies between 'description' and 'creation.' These articulations are not universal, with the position of the subject in space and time (their class, their race, their gender, the 'moment' in which they experience the place) producing variables that ensure no two articulations of the 'same' place will, in fact, be 'the same.' Yet these different articulations will come together to produce place as a collective form: a locus for memory, struggle and historical meaning.

Massey likens this articulation to editorial practice. 'If space is . . . a simultaneity of stories-so-far,' she writes, 'then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space' (2005: 130). Indeed, some subjects may be unable (or unwilling) to identify the meaning in particular spaces: their hylomorphic perspective allows them to perceive only chaos and/or inertia. They are thus unable to 'articulate' them as places, or can at most understand them only as 'deviant' places. Here we might think of the gentrifiers who position Satwa as a place of deviant criminality and chaos; or of colonizers who saw territories to be colonized as blank spaces (Smith, 1996; Cresswell, 2004: 9; Hardy, 2012; Hickey, 2014).

The distinction between space and place is not intrinsic to the form in question, then, but in the relationship between that form and those who experience, encounter or inhabit it. Place is still 'space made meaningful,' but this meaning is an altogether messier, more entangled and situated affair. As many Indigenous people have understood for generations, place is a way to name 'the relationship of things to each other' (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001: 22–23); and of course the relationships of things to each other change through time. This includes, of course, relationships internal to the place but between place and the world more broadly: place is not apart from, but constituted through, the global (Massey, 1994). Thus, *contra* Harvey, place is not the bearer of static identity: places are full of conflict and change over time (even their 'here' moves as land masses shift or communities are uprooted but seek to retain their 'sense of place'); and it is these intra-active relations and their articulations that produce place's identity. As for Tuan, there are affective 'bonds' between place and people, but neither 'place' nor 'people' is a stable category: the bonds contribute to the creation of them both. The temporal frame in which these identity-producing intra-actions occur varies, of course: it may be 'geological' time, as with the formation of valleys; or it may be far more rapid, as with the gentrification of an inner-city area. But time remains a key component and not the enemy of place: we might, with Kevin Lynch (1972), ask 'what time is this place?' as well as 'where is this place?' Places are (re)produced through 'movement and rest, speed and slowness' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a: 282). Any particular place will be produced by a whole range of these intersecting time-scales, as well as the continued presence of that which is 'past.'

Anarres is precisely this kind of place. Whilst classic utopian fiction depicts static 'Good places' established through the hylomorphic imposition on spaces otherwise capable only of chaos or inertia, *The Dispossessed* is one of many more recent works of utopian fiction in which place is a dynamic form that plays an agential role in unfolding events (Clark, 2009: 21; Moylan, 2014). Such an understanding was integral to the founding of Anarres, in fact: it was developed not through the application of a predetermined plan for the 'Good place' but as place of permanent revolution, in accordance with the ideology of 'Odonianism' (named after its founder, Laia Odo): a form of 'anarchism as pre-figured in early Taoist thought, and expounded by Shelley and Kropotkin, Goldman and Goodman,' as it is described in 'The Day Before the Revolution'—a short story prologue to *The Dispossessed*, concerned with a day in the life of Odo (Le Guin, 1975: 285).

Socialized by Odonianism—and inspired by his research in temporal physics—the novel's main character Shevek believes (with echoes of Heraclitus) that: '[y]ou shall not go down twice to the same river. Nor can you go home again.' Yet he rejects any straightforward privileging of becoming over place (or even their separation), adding that

> what is most changeable is shown to be fullest of eternity, and your relationship to the river, and the river's relationship to you and to itself, turns out to be at once more complex and more reassuring than merely a lack of identity. You *can* go home again. . . . so long as you understand that home is a place where you have never been.
>
> (Le Guin, 2006: 48)

Anarres is, of course, a 'place' in the colloquial sense, whilst the spaces created by and in which musical improvisation and education occur stretch such an understanding. Yet this stretching is not, I hope, to the point of incredulity: they are, after all, spaces that are articulated in particular ways and in which a multiplicity of intra-actions occur. They are locations where events 'take place' (Horton in Horton & Freire, 1990: 53), where stories collect, and which are rich with meaning.

The Common Good

The hylomorphic imposition of a moral order that seeks to fix life in the name of a predetermined 'Good' is clearly incompatible with the understanding of place developed above. Here, then, I want to return to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza's ethical philosophy and contemporary thinking of/from 'the common' in order to posit an affective concept of 'the common good' that can work with the understanding of place outlined above in order to produce 'good place.' The term 'common' is used here to signify the creativity (re)produced through the labour power of intra-acting human and more-than-human bodies (de Lissovoy, 2011; Eden, 2012; Stavrides, 2016). Capitalism, of course, seeks to enclose and harness

this labour power for its own reproduction, but (relatively) freed from such 'bossing' it has the potential to (re)produce the world in good ways. This, then, is a communist politics in the autonomist and libertarian tradition (Sabia, 2005; Screpanti, 2007; Eden, 2012), although 'the common' is far more than simply 'the commons' as a finite, commonly owned resource (Casarino, 2008). This, I hope, will become clear through engaging with those concepts adjacent to the common good: power, freedom and democracy.

Power

The common good is produced when bodies intra-act with each other such that they maximize their capacities to affect and be affected, capacities Deleuze refers to as 'power-to' (*puissance*) (Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a: xviii). Rather than being a 'thing' that subjects struggle to enclose, then (as in liberal, zero-sum understandings of power and its relations), power exists in encounters and, where these encounters are good, is mutually beneficial: the increase or enhancement of a body's power to act *also* increasing its power to be acted upon, and vice-versa (as I argued in Chapter One, exercises of domination do not increase the dominating body's power in any meaningful way). This makes possible collective increases in power such that the increase or enhancement of an (in)dividual's power to act also increases the power of other (in)dividuals to act; and thus of the collective body to act, creating what we might refer to as 'power-with' (Kreisberg, 1992): a power-in-common.

Although not figured in terms of power, this operation is clearly evident on Anarres (cf. Sabia, 2005: 114). Having been told that 'the law of evolution is that the strongest replies,' Shevek replies—with obvious echoes of Odo/ Kropotkin—by saying, 'Yes, and the strongest, in the existence of any social animal, are those who are the most social. In human terms, the most ethical' (Le Guin, 2006: 10). To be ethically good is to work with others for the mutual increase of affective capacities, and to remain open to such encounters is an ethical imperative, for 'to lock out is to lock in' (Le Guin, 2006: 39). Power-with, then, resides in the common; attempts to enclose it lead to domination, as becomes clear in the following chapter. Such power must not be conflated with control over other bodies in space and/or time. As Daniel Wildcat notes, in experiencing such empowerment we may in fact lose control (Wildcat, 2005: 422): we cannot use it to hylomorphically shape space and time into a 'Good' form. In this, as I note shortly, it is a power of unknowable becoming.

This mutuality should not, however, be conflated with reciprocity. As David Graeber notes, the latter is based on the principle of receiving what you give and thus reduces human intra-action to exchanges understood through the (moral) logic of the market: 'I have given something with the value of x, therefore I expect something with the value of x back' (money, of course, coming to function as the referent through which such value is determined): this creates a moral economy organized around debt, a key technology of control. Mutuality, however, does not assume that intra-actions can be assigned value in this way,

working instead in the knowledge that something offered contributes to the (re) production of good relations of collectivity that prove beneficial across time (Graeber, 2011: 100–101).

If this is a little abstract, then an account of the processes of musical improvisation might help to illustrate the point further, for the place of improvisation is (re)produced by the operation of this power-with:

MUSICIAN 1 begins to play a drone on their violin: *an expression of their capacity to affect and be affected (his power-to).*

MUSICIAN 2 emphasizes a subtle rhythmic variation in the drone on their drum kit: *they are affected and this affection enables them to express their power-to. Power-with emerges.*

MUSICIAN 1 increases the volume of their drone in response to the increasing volume, and slightly harshens their tone by bowing harder: *the continuation and expansion of power-with.*

MUSICIAN 3 plays across the rhythm with a saxophone melody that draws on, but does not fully conform to, modal jazz. They 'overblow' certain notes to produce a distortion that resonates with the harsh violin: *the continuation and expansion of power-with.*[6]

And so on. A process that might neatly be surmised by the oft-used phrase 'everybody solos, nobody solos'; or by Fred Moten's claim that 'to improvise, where one composes in real time *in common,* is where one is discomposed in real time' (in Fitzgerald & Moten, 2015, emphasis added). Musicians each lose control of the performance, but in that loss of control they gain power. Elina Hytönen-Ng (2013) theorizes this through the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'flow,' the (supposed) 'key to happiness' (or joy, as we might have it), which empowers subjects to create the conditions of life even as they 'lose themselves' in the immanence of intra-active affections. In the liner notes to his 1959 album *Change of the Century,* Ornette Coleman clearly describes such an experience, writing that his group has no 'preconceived' idea of the music they will produce, Coleman becoming 'so busy and absorbed' that he is 'not aware of what I'm doing at the time I'm doing it' (Coleman, 2008: 254).

In thinking through the commoning intra-actions of musicians in this way it is possible to articulate a 'good place' in and through which improvisation happens. Something similar occurs in many radical experiments in education; albeit through slower, more cautious and less 'ecstatic' form of intra-action. In contrast to the classroom as it is traditionally understood, where knowledge is hylomorphically transferred from a teacher to the student body, the place of learning here is produced through dialogue, play and embodied intra-actions in which learners (and educators) share their lived experiences, hopes and fears (Freire, 1972; McLaren, 1995: 66; Barad, 2007: 149; de Lissovoy, 2011: 1129).[7] This knowledge helps students (and teachers, where that distinction is maintained) to orient themselves in the world and think through how it might be transformed.

The radical educator Shveta Sarda describes such a process well, while noting the hylomorphic fear of chaos:

> Knowledge is about the bold and simultaneous existence of a multiplicity of voices that fragment our conception of reality, decentre the very act of the production of knowledge, the translation of lifeworlds; this is where the edges of our worlds are in conversation with one another, not muted and silenced. The speech of millions is essential in this. What withholds and prevents speech is the fear of listening to too many voices, the fear of a resultant cacophony.
>
> (2007: 231)

Indeed, Sarda draws an analogy between this process and musical improvisation, stating that 'there is a richness in the multiplicity of a band when it plays myriad instruments, when there is improvisation, and more than one sound can be heard' (2007: 231). Le Guin, too, uses sonic analogy, writing of the 'noise' of an Anarres stream: 'a ceaseless harmony composed of disharmonies' (2006: 156). That noise and dissonance is explored further in the following chapter.

Freedom

On Anarres, the mutual responsibility of power-with is figured as freedom. 'It's your nature to be Tirin,' Shevek says to a friend, 'and my nature to be Shevek, and our common nature to be Odonians, responsible to one another. And that responsibility is freedom. To avoid it, would be to lose our freedom' (Le Guin, 2006: 39).[8] Indeed, freedom is central to the operation of power-with, challenging the liberal assumption (which powers so much anti-utopianism) that freedom and power are opposing forces; and playing a central role in both improvisation and radical education. In the former, the term 'free improvisation' is often used to name musicking that completely eschews predetermined arrangements (although this is often understood as a negative freedom and as the property of individuals), whilst the educational experiments I engage with are sometimes understood to produce and be produced by 'free schools,' constituted by an internal freedom and seeking to expand freedom throughout society (Antliff, 2007; Motta, 2012).

For bell hooks (1994), radical experiments in education constitute 'the practice of freedom.' For her, and others, this is a positive freedom: classroom praxis, design and curricula have to be carefully configured in order to create the conditions for its flourishing, and freedom occurs through bodies intraacting with—rather than being 'free from'—other bodies (Antliff, 2007: 263). Likewise, a positive understanding of freedom is displayed by many improvisers, not least those with an interest in pedagogies designed to foster improvising skills (Higgins & Campbell, 2010; Clark, 2012). This freedom is grounded in the here-and-now but in its expression produces the future. Dennis Atkinson, for example, describes radical experiments as education as 'not focus[sing] . . . on what we are and should be, that is to say some transcendent position towards

being,' as would be expected of a hylomorphic utopianism, 'but upon the potentiality and "unknown" of becoming' (2011: 12). This is the freedom sought by the Mephi, but it is a freedom that creates—rather than fleeing from—place. Lee Higgins and Patricia Shehan Campbell, for example, state that freedom in improvisation 'look[s] towards . . . a future that is unknown and unpredictable,' generating 'something new and different from what has come before' through 'ethical actions' that function as invitiations to further action (Higgins & Campbell, 2010: 5, 12). This freedom, then, is the freedom that Darko Suvin associates with Bloch's *novum*: 'the possibility of something new and truly different coming about' (2010: 88); although there must be a degree of deferral here: a 'new and truly different' form that restricted bodies' capacities to affect and be affected would not be freedom. The possibility must be held open: freedom is not a possibility that is exhausted in any particular actualization.

There is, of course, a risk associated with freedom. By definition, the consequences of something that cannot be foreseen carry no guarantees: it necessitates a loss of control over both space and time. This fear of losing control is frequently reported by those new to musical improvisation and radical experiments in education, and is central to the place-making narrative of *The Dispossessed*, in which Sabul—Shevek's 'senior' colleague at the University in Abbenay, the major city of Anarres—seeks to prevent the dissemination of the latest work in theoretical physics produced on Urras, in order that he might maintain particular relations of domination that he has cultivated. In this, the relation between enclosure and domination are made clear, as reflected in the narrative's description of Shevek's thought process:

> Surely freedom lay in openness rather than in secrecy, and freedom is always worth the risk. He could not see what the risk was, anyway. It occurred to him once that Sabul wanted to keep the new Urrasti physics *private*—to own it, as a property, a source of power over his colleagues on Anarres.
>
> (Le Guin, 2006: 96)

By enclosing this knowledge, Sabul wants to prevent Shevek from entering into relationships with Urrasti physicists that will threaten his domination (by revealing his limited grasp of physics and thus his deliberate attempts at cultivating this domination). There is here, then, a further relational aspect to freedom, well-captured by Jeremy Gilbert's claim that it refers not to 'an index of a person's autonomy from all possible relationships, but rather of the range and scope of possible relationships into which they can enter' (2014: 35). Freedom, like power, is no longer a zero-sum game: the 'freedom of others, far from limiting or negating my liberty, is on the contrary its necessary condition and confirmation' (Bakunin, 1953: 267–268).

Democracy

Understood in this way, freedom is the product of and condition for democracy: a form of organization that immanently emerges through the affective

intra-action of bodies and 'liberate[s] possibilities from the imposition of all "false necessity" to maintain an anarchic skepticism towards both truth and power, and to facilitate the practical work that these commitments require' such that as many bodies as possible can be involved in the production of the social world (Amsler, 2015: 73, 111; cf. Hardt, 1995; Virno, 2004: 69; Eden, 2012: 79; Shiva, 2016). Such a democratically negotiated freedom is evident in the 'free group improvisation' Coleman describes in the liner notes to *Change of the Century*, in which 'the musicians have [a] complete freedom,' but one that is at all times dependent upon 'group effort' and the 'rapport' established between musicians (2008: 254).

Democracy, of course, implies some degree of disagreement, and good intra-actions can be marked by conflict as much as agreement. Indeed, this conflict can play a constructive role, as it does in Moylan's critical utopias. The anger of Shevek's friend Bedap at the increasing presence of relations of domination on Anarres, which expresses itself through heated arguments with Shevek, eventually plays a key role in Shevek's decision to struggle against this domination, something I explore at greater length in the following chapter. In the example of improvisation given above, meanwhile, Musician Three may have changed the direction of the performance because they didn't like where it had previously been heading; and such 'disagreements' may continue throughout a performance. Power-with can never be guaranteed: it is not a form that can be established once-and-for-all; and conflict may help prevent it from ossifying into domination through what Jesse Cohn refers to as 'sustained dissensus' (2006: 256; cf. Springer, 2011; Maeckelbergh, 2012). The object of such dissensus is not to annihilate the other but rather to use disagreement productively such that 'what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate' might be revealed (Mouffe, 2007: 4).[9] At a recent free improvisation performance I attended in Belfast, for example, the drummer settled into a generic funk groove of the kind that underpins a thousand tired jams daily. Clearly annoyed by this, the double bassist abandoned his instrument and began scraping a chair across the metal floor. This lifted what had previously been a fairly flat performance, pushing it in an unexpected (and unforeseeable) direction. Musicians visibly and audibly responded to this intra-vention with an increase in their power-to; and thus in collective power-with. (My reading of this situation was confirmed in a question and answer session with the musicians following the performance. The drummer seemed to have particularly enjoyed it.)

Openness to disagreement and conflict is vital in an educational setting too: whilst there are no immediately urgent political implications to musical improvisers producing a performance that is little more than a stale repetition of dominant trends, the reproduction of dominant consensus within an educational setting can be in need of more urgent address. As Ira Shor points out, education does not occur in a blank space 'free from history, society, or cultural conflict related to gender, race, and class' (1996: 16); and allowing those present in a classroom to name operations of misogyny or white supremacy, for example, is of extreme importance (Ellsworth, 1989).

Utopian Subjectivity

Rethinking the (in)Dividual

In Chapter One I argued that the character D-503 in Zamyatin's *We* should not be read as a (heroic) individual pitted against a utopia that is, in fact, always-already a dystopia. In so doing, I sought to complicate the claim that 'utopia' necessarily refers to a place in which the collective triumphs over the individual without reverting to the disavowed utopianism of our present, in which the individual (supposedly) triumphs over the collective. Indeed, I sought to problematize the foundations of this narrative (the binary between the individual and the collective) by showing how individuals are constituted through social 'subjection,' which is to say that they are not simply autonomous from power but constituted by it.

This construction is presented in a dystopian manner in *We*, but it need not be so. The form of freedom outlined above comes into being through collective power-with, affirming Marx and Engels' claim that '[o]nly within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence personal freedom becomes possible only within the community.' (1998: 86). Indeed, if an individual subject's capacities are not pre-given but are produced through the intra-actions they experience, then the specific combination of intra-actions to which a subject is exposed will produce that subject's individuality. To riff off Donna Haraway briefly, it might be said that to join with other bodies in an assemblage of 'power-with' is to 'become-with': to intra-act with bodies such that you and they change (2008). Thus, the qualities typically associated with an autonomous individual in fact emerge through an ongoing process of 'individuation' (Simondon, 1992; Manning, 2013; Gilbert, 2014: 108–111), with pauses in this process functioning as moments of 'singularity' (Scott, 2014: 17). The greater the affective capacity of the intra-actions they enter into, the greater the capacity for individuality.[10]

Anarresti society, for example, understands that 'there is little the individual can do or be, little he or she can become or achieve, without the help and cooperation of others' (Sabia, 2005: 114); and good improvisation enables musicians to develop their skills—and become 'new musicians'—through their intra-actions with others. In radical experiments in education, meanwhile, the process of learning as knowledge production is bound up with this individuation: knowledge does not simply 'add' to learners' subjectivities but transforms them (Freire, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Shor, 1993). As the prospectus of the Black Mountain College stated, the focus of education should not be individual learners but 'what happens between them,' for that is 'where the life of them is to be sought' (quoted in Molesworth, 2015: 51).

For some, the dissensual tensions so necessary for the operation of the common good are evidence that some degree of conflict between the individual and the collective is inevitable. Indeed, for Dan Sabia it is this tension

that functions as the motor keeping (anarcho-communist) utopias (such as Anarres) open:

> Given the interdependence of self and society, and the individuality and sociality of human beings, the yearning for harmony is natural, and a normative good. But a complete reconciliation of individuality and community, of personal freedom and social responsibilities, would imply the complete satisfaction of individual needs and desires, values and aspirations. As long as individuals, in their manifest particularity, are free, one must expect diversity and innovation, and so then, different and often conflicting, unsatisfied, and changing needs, desires and aspirations. The ideal of complete harmony implies the death of freedom, and of life.
>
> (2005: 125)

In this, for Sabia, lies the ambiguity of *The Dispossessed*—'not even [actualized] anarchist communism can reconcile completely the ideals of individualism and community, and this bad result is, also, good' (2005: 125). It is in this gap, he suggests, that politics survives. Yet this, I suggest, is not an anarcho-communist understanding of politics but a liberal one, with the collective associated with stasis (and thus, potentially, domination) and the individual with change (and thus freedom).

Sabia's reading of *The Dispossessed* is not inaccurate, and both Le Guin's narrative and characters on Anarres frequently suggest that individual freedom is, ultimately, what (re)produces Anarres' (ambiguous) utopianism: Shevek, for example, speaks of his 'own initiative' as 'the only initiative I acknowledge' (Le Guin, 2006: 67; see Bell, 2016 for a critique of this). Yet I want to suggest that collectivity does not oppress individuals *because they are individuals*, but rather that such acts are forms of domination enacted by a structurally advantaged social body on a structurally disadvantaged social body. So whilst Sabia is correct to recognize that—on Anarres as in his philosophy—society is an 'abstraction' (2005: 113); what he, Le Guin's narrative and many Anarresti fail to note is that so too is the individual. Shevek is not given an unfair, oppressive work posting by Anarres' 'Production and Distribution Committee' because he is Shevek, an individual, but because he is a worker and they, unofficially, constitute a boss class. They act in their class interests (not, on Anarres, the financial exploitation of workers, but the manipulation of working conditions to their advantage). This bossing undoubtedly harms Shevek's *individuation* (and thus is 'bad'), but is not an offence against an innate, pre-existent *individuality*.

Furthermore, it is important to note that while the individual cannot be fully 'divided' from the social field through which it is (re)produced, neither is it a stable, self-identical subject. The individual, in other words, *is* divisible: we all occupy multiple, sometimes conflicting, subject positions. In the control society this is a decidedly dystopian state of affairs, with banks of data taken from subjects to control and profit from them, and 'flexibility' (the ability to be different things to different people) held as a key character trait, but this does not

mean that we should romantically hold 'the individual' as a utopian figure—a move implicit in many critiques of neoliberalism's effects on the subject (Mirowski, 2013, for example). Indeed, although Deleuze's 'dividual'—as he names this divided subject—is figured in dystopian terms, it can be brought into relation with the figure of what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'schizo-revolutionary' (2004b): a term used to designate the utopian potential of the divided subject. This might be applied to D-503's disintegration, which coincides with his involvement with the Mephi. Shevek, too, becomes less invested in what he had previously regarded as certainties on Anarres, losing his sense of self and becoming increasingly revolutionary in the process.

Whilst the term 'schizo-revolutionary' can perhaps be read as a comment on the social construction of 'madness' as a category for the policing of a difference that threatens the status quo (Foucault, 1977)—a trope utilized by some Black improvisers (Lock, 1999)—it rather risks the romanticization of mental illness, and so I avoid it from here on in.[11] Yet the concept of the self as fractured should be retained for utopianism, however. In this, the (in)dividual is understood to occupy multiple, variously intra-acting 'identities' that make themselves felt or are deliberately brought to the fore in different settings. Exploring these identities and sharing the experiential, embodied knowledges that accompany them is central to radical experiments in education, where their intra-actions are understood to 'open up the possibilities of becoming other(s) beyond the avenues, relations, values and meanings that seem to be laid out for us (Motta, 2013: 5; cf. Ellsworth, 1989; Semetsky, 2006). In improvisation, meanwhile, the decentred subject reveals itself through embodied action. John Corbett writes of how the bodies of the drummer Milford Graves and the saxophonist Evan Parker (and indeed their instruments) do not function as unities when they perform. Describing the latter, he states that the saxophone

> may be played in such a way that it allows it to be fragmented . . . likewise at the level of the body of the performer. Fingers, mouth, tongue, teeth, lungs: these are distinct members of the solo-saxophone ensemble. Joined together as the Evan Parker solo assemblage, they are constellated in such a way as to break the seeming unity of melodic expression.
>
> (1994: 82)

There is, he notes, 'no longer a single player per se' (1994: 84). Peter Szendy, meanwhile, observes that between the pianist Thelonius Monk's two hands:

> there is more than just stylistic dissonance: a whole world. An attentive witness—a pianist who has listened to him a lot—has written, "the left hand was classic, and the right was modern. Take away the left hand and there would be the Monk of twenty years later. Remove the right, and we would be back to the jazz of twenty years later" (De Wilde, 1997: 20).
>
> (2015: 40)

We may not be able to imagine the future, but we can embody it in the here-and-now.

Rethinking Collectivity: The Multitude

If the account of the individual given above destabilizes a binary opposition between the individual and the collective, it is equally important to undermine this binary from the other side. How might we think collectivity such that it is no longer opposed to but constitutive of individuality? My suggestion here is that the collective subject of utopia(nism) takes the form of the 'multitude,' as developed from the work of Spinoza. This refers not simply to the coming together of otherwise autonomous individuals (Ruddick, 2010: 25–26), but to a form that is simultaneously 'One' and 'many': a collective that provides rather than destroys the conditions for the individuation of becoming-with. The multitude is the improvising group whose many intra-actions allow for the saxophonist to develop a new way of playing that they had not previously thought of or experienced. It is the people of Anarres, providing each other with the conditions necessary for the maximization of their capacities. It is the classroom of many lived experiences that allows for new possibilities for learning bodies, creating those bodies in the process through individuation. It is produced by material, embodied difference, but is also singular: the 'One' 'differentiates it from an atomized mass,' 'stand[ing] at the point of common of the multitude, the shared relationships that make their singularities possible and richer' (Eden, 2012: 37).

For thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the multitude names 'the class operators of immaterial labour' (Negri & Dufourmantelle, 2004: 112), which is to say that the organization of work (paid and unpaid) in post-Fordist (or post-Taylorist) capitalism creates the multitude. Thus, they claim that the 'future institutional structure of [the] new society is embedded in the affective, cooperative and communicative relationships of social production. The networks of social production, in other words provide an institutional logic capable of sustaining a new society' (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 350). Whilst this book shares the prefigurative immanence of such an approach, it does not share the sense of imm*i*nence that Hardt and Negri sometimes display regarding the emergence of this 'new society': on occasion they seem convinced that it might emerge from capitalism at any given moment. Indeed, Paolo Virno's (2004) rather more pessimistic account—that capital frequently puts the multitude's power-with to work for its own ends—seems rather more accurate. Furthermore, whilst Hardt and Negri acknowledge various forms of paid and unpaid labour, they privilege hi-tech, well-paid forms of intellectual labour, which is overwhelmingly the preserve of those who enjoy various forms of privilege; and which depend on numerous forms of racialized, gendered and classed oppression and exploitation for its perpetuation (Federici, 2004; Dyer-Witheford, 2015). In this, they downplay the importance of the struggles, forms of organization and utopian potentials of those who are oppressed and exploited

in such a way; and potentially points to a politics in which their struggles are actually held to hinder the multitude's utopian potential (Eden, 2012: 119–123; Caffentzis, 2013; Lewis & Bell, 2015). Its temporality, in other words, is far too linear (and orthodoxly marxist): the commons emerges in and from the most technologically 'advanced' forms of capitalism, rather than being a form that exists in various spatiotemporal locations prior to, (relatively) outside of, within and against capitalism. My use of the term 'multitude,' then, is conceptual: it names a collective subject with utopian potential, but does not affirm that this subject has been created by (particular sectors of) late capitalism.

This, of course, leaves questions open about precisely who the collective, multitudinous subject of utopianism is; or where it might be. Or, perhaps, the question is not so much who?—there are, after all, numerous groups organizing within and against the here-and-now (and living relatively autonomously from it, in their own there-and-thens)—but *how?* By what mechanisms can these groups connect? How will their different foci, languages and strategies cohere? The answer will not, of course, appear first in ink, and certainly not in academic literature (although I offer some arguments as to where the answer *will not* appear in the following chapter). Rather, if an answer is to be given it will be one produced in struggle and solidarity. Whilst musical improvisation and radical forms of education can only play a partial role in that struggle, my hope (and best guess) is that the kinds of intra-action they are (re)produced by and (re)produce will be of vital importance in gestures—stumblings—towards any answer. These intra-actions will of course, be insufficient—and an array of cunning, violence and aesthetics well beyond the scope of this book will have to be deployed.

Identity and the Body

In Chapter One I outlined how our contemporary dystopia is produced by and (re)produces (the subjugation of) particular bodies. I argued that in many cases the identities ascribed to these bodies is, to a considerable degree, the result of this subjugation. In this sense, it might be thought that the task of utopianism should be to detach from these identifications as thoroughly and quickly as possible, and I explore arguments for the 'self-abolition' of identity in the following chapter.

Such self-abolition is often held to be 'utopian' in the sense of being (perhaps dangerously) naïve, however. The editors of a recent book on the relationship between 'embodied subjectivity' and musical improvisation implicitly criticize the utopian for adopting such a position, arguing that it seeks to

> place the gendered, sexed, raced, classed, disabled, and technologized body at the centre of critical improvisation studies and move beyond the field's tendency toward celebrating improvisation's utopian and democratic ideals by highlighting the improvisation of marginalized subjects.
> (Siddall & Waterman, 2016: back cover)

Elizabeth Ellsworth, meanwhile, argues that critical pedagogy all too often operates through a 'utopian' politics by claiming to create classroom dynamics that operate free from histories of oppression. As she notes, these are also undesirable, 'because they are always predicated on the interests of those who are in the position to define utopian projects' (1989: 308).

The use of 'utopian' in these critiques echoes Marx and Engels' critique of utopian socialism for attempting to spontaneously develop ideal social relations without reference to the material conditions that structure society. For us, this means that whilst bodies might *ontologically* have the capacity to affect and be affected, but this does not mean that they do so *materially*. My attempt here is to think through how utopianism might proceed from this unequal material organization by attending to identity as a locus through which this domination is organized, as urged by a number of utopian studies scholars (Bammer, 1991; Sargisson, 1996; Muñoz, 2009; Moylan, 2014). This is not done in the spirit of affirming those identities as they are constructed by dominant relations of power, but rather by attending to the specific historical experiences of creative resistance—and, indeed, utopianism—that they have generated. As I note in the following chapter, this utopianism might ultimately lead to the abolition of identity, but this is something to be worked out in struggle rather than a principle to be established over and above struggle.

Fred Moten opens *In the Break* his work on Black radicalism as performance—with the claim that 'the history of blackness is testament to the fact that objects can and do resist' (2003: 1). In this he rejects a simple dichotomy between things and bodies, as discussed in Chapter One, suggesting that—*contra* the structuring power of whiteness—things are in fact also bodies: they have capacities, including the capacity of resistance. Through analogy—rather than equivalence (so as to allow attention to the specificities of each form of oppression [Ladson-Billings, 2000: 207–208])—we should also attend to the ways in which feminized, gender non-conforming, disabled and working class bodies are also positioned as objects, and to how these identities intra-sect in particular bodies (Gray-Garcia, 2007; Ahmed, 2010: 252–253; Puar, 2012). This resistance is not simply a response to powers of domination and exploitation but constitutes a power-to. Identity, then, is both a product of domination and a site of resistance to that domination. For those whose identities have marked and been (re)produced by their domination, identities are

> places of possibility within ourselves [that] are dark because they are ancient and hidden: they have survived and grown strong through darkness. Within these deep places, each one of us [member of that oppressed group] holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling. The woman's place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep.
> (Lorde, 1984: 36)

Attention to the specificities of embodied identity must lie at the heart of utopianism. The classrooms in which radical education occurs are not sites free

from identity, but are rather produced through the intra-actions of differently embodied histories. 'Everything comes out of the past and goes beyond,' as Myles Horton—founder of the Highlander Folk School—puts it (in Horton & Freire, 1990: 7; cf. Weiler, 1994: 16). Working class subjects, for example, will have knowledge of how bosses exploit workers but may also have material, embodied experiences of struggling against this. Such 'truths' cannot simply be left at the door in the name of equality-as-sameness and have important roles to play in constructing new forms within the present that also point beyond it (hooks, 1994; Motta, 2013). Subjects who do not conform to norms of identification, meanwhile, may feel compelled to 'create new space.' The trans, indigenous, Chicana music producer Elysia Crampton (whose album *Demon City* [2016] is a striking work of queer indigenous utopianism) argues that as a queer subject, 'You can't do otherwise—your existence is curating a new space. If you don't follow that through, you can't live successfully or get the most out of life' (Kelly, 2015: factmag.com; cf. Nirta, 2014).

This play of oppression and empowering resistance is a strong tradition in musical improvisation. Improvisatory musical practices are widespread among musicians from the African diaspora, whose performances often 'reference excluding continuities from the past while calling new collectivities into being in the present' (Fischlin et al., 2013: xiii), creating what Graham Lock refers to as a 'blutopianism': a utopianism that acknowledges and builds from—rather than disavowing—histories of oppression (Lock, 1999; cf. Moten, 2003; Lewis, 2008). In both radical education and musical improvisation, Black and female subjects—historically 'relegated' to embodied existence by a patriarchal Western value system that privileges the mind—reclaim the body as a site of knowledge production and meaning making (Butterwick & Selman, 2012; A Nanobody, 2013; Carles & Comolli, 2015). In so doing, they find new ways to affect and be affected, and forge a space for themselves within the present and into the future.

Expanded Subjectivity: The Human, the Non-Human and the More-Than-Human

In *Fool's Gold,* Lucy Sargisson draws on the work of Jane Bennett to suggest that utopianism might engage with the agency of the more-than-human world (2012: 121–124). Through the framework being adopted here, this means that the affective body should not be limited to the human. Such a position notes that collective and individual bodies are always-already produced through their intra-actions with non-human bodies (Haraway, 1987); and that more-than-human bodies (including those that are not 'alive' in the biological sense) also have capacities that do not depend on their intra-actions with the 'human' (Whatmore, 2006; Stengers, 2010; Tallbear, 2015). Such an understanding rejects any divide between 'nature' and 'culture,' and is vital to ensure that utopianism remains ecologically viable. We cannot be like the inhabitants of OneState, building a giant wall around our 'culture' to keep out a 'nature'

associated with racialized 'savages,' nor see nature as a form open for accumulation and exploitation (Moore, 2015). Indeed, even against those who would advocate the redistribution of land ownership, utopianism must refuse the idea that land is something that can be owned: *contra* Woody Guthrie, the land is not my land, your land or, indeed, anyone's: at least where that apostrophe signifies ownership rather than intra-action (cf. Tuck & Yang, 2012: 24).

Attention to the non/more-than-human is often hailed as a 'new' turn within the academy, but it is central to Spinoza's ontology; and to numerous Indigenous cosmologies, which have long understood non-human matter to have agency and to play an active part in the ordering of the world (Todd, 2014; cf. Beeman & Blenkinsop, 2008; Beeman, 2013 on the resonances between Spinozist and Anishnaabe cosmology). Indeed, whilst radical approaches to education have all too often re-inscribed these hierarchies by appealing to the human as a privileged actor (Bell & Russell, 2000; Kahn, 2010), many Indigenous educators have stressed that 'land, water, people, culture, plants, sky, animals, and rocks' play an active role in the learning process (Houston, 2015: 134), an approach also adopted by many of those working in various 'new materialisms' (see Taylor et al., 2012 for an introduction to some approaches in early years' education). Here, the more-than-human world is not simply to be learned about but is to be learned with. This further problematizes understandings of space as an empty container of matter (because even non-human relations are rich with meaning), and is essential for the cultivation of knowledges and practices for survival (let alone utopianism) in the face of climate change.

In musical improvisation the agential capacity of non-human and posthuman bodies can be explored by understanding the manner in which musicians' capacities are determined and expanded through their intra-actions with non-human technologies and agential matter. Digital and analog technologies can be utilized such that human performers 'improvis[e] with the machines' (Oliveros, 2016: 85), though these machines will carry marks of the social relations out of which they were produced (cf. Lewis, 2000). Conventional instruments, meanwhile, should not be understood as neutral tools under musicians' complete control, but as bodies that exercise their own agency and contribute to power-with. Ornette Coleman often played a plastic alto saxophone—initially because it was all he could afford, but latterly because he found he could produce sounds from it that he could not from a brass instrument. Thus, to paraphrase Bruno Latour on the relationship between a gun and a human, we can say that '[y]ou are different with a [particular] saxophone in your mouth; the saxophone is different with you playing it. You are another body because you blow the saxophone; the saxophone is another body because it has entered into a relationship with you' (1999: 178–179).[12] On Anarres, meanwhile, Shevek's partner Takver—frequently presented by Le Guin as someone (re)produced by and (re)producing Anarresti values most fully—is described as becoming-with in this way: 'It was strange to see [her] take a leaf into her hand, or even a rock,' says the narrative (channelling Shevek). 'She became an extension of it: it of her' (Le Guin, 2006: 161).

In accordance with this utopianism's rejection of space as an empty container, free improvisers often work with its agential capacities in their musicking. Pauline Oliveros refers to the properties of space as being 'as important as instruments in making music' (2016: 82), whilst musicians active in Tokyo's onkyô movement improvise with rather than seeking to negate the properties and noises of any given space (Novak, 2010: 46). The saxophonist John Butcher, meanwhile, has improvised in and with unusually 'resonant spaces,' including a cave, a former ice house and a former oil tank. A selection of such performances can be heard on his album *Resonant Spaces*, in the liner notes to which he states:

> I suppose I could have played quite minimally and let the performance be more about the sounds of the environment, but after all the effort people had put in to set it up I really wanted to make something happen. If I have a philosophy about this kind of situation, it's that it needs some friction. I mean, between forcing your usual musical concerns onto the place, and allowing the setting to direct the actual result. I don't want to just demonstrate each space's sound. It should be an encounter between a musician and a place that gives a fighting chance to drawing something new from them both.
>
> (quoted in Kopf, 2008)

These places, then—including those that would widely be regarded as belonging to the 'natural world'—exercise their own agency in the work, resulting in an ethically good intra-active becoming rather than an imposition of a moral Good.

Reaching beyond Utopia

The operation of the common good cannot be confined to utopia's immediate internal organization, but needs to be considered in utopia's relationship to the social milieu in which it is situated. Here, differences in context (including the scale of the utopia) are clearly of importance, but as a general rule utopias should remain open to intra-action with the broader milieu within and against which they exist. Musical improvisation scenes can quickly become ossified if they are closed to new members, styles of playing and forms of instrumentation (Bell, 2012: 144–145), whilst experiments in radical education must remain connected to the issues facing the communities in which they are embedded, lest they serve only a self-selecting activist vanguard (Goldman, 2010). As Lucy Sargisson, drawing on Kim Stanley Robinson, puts it, 'the world is always inter-connected and larger problems must be addressed in the search for utopia' (2012: 74). This is not simply an ethical imperative on behalf of the rest of the world (what good is a utopia if it is inaccessible?), but a necessity for the utopia itself.

Shevek reflects on this as he first leaves Anarres for A-Io (an exaggerated representation of 1970s USA) on Urras, noting that 'to lock out is to lock in' (Le Guin, 2006: 10). To develop a utopia in isolation from its broader social

milieu is to cut it off from intra-actions, becomings and struggles that lie beyond it, and which may invigorate it internally. Shevek is the first Anarresti to travel to Urras for decades, and so important is the border between the two worlds that *The Dispossessed* opens with a description of it:

> There was a wall. It did not look important. . . . Where it crossed the road-way, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall.
>
> (Le Guin, 2006: 1)

On one level this border works: it has allowed Anarres to develop its Odonian world. Yet given that both A-Io and its 'socialist' 'cold war' rival Thu presumably possess the military power to invade Anarres, the (clearly physically inadequate) border's maintenance is predicated on Anarres supplying A-Io with raw minerals, thus making Anarres complicit in A-Io's colonialism and in the perpetuation of bloody proxy wars between it and Thu (and, indeed, a colony of A-Io, which 'gave' the moon to Odonian revolutionaries in the first place). Furthermore, the border has resulted in the political, intellectual and cultural ossification of Anarres and its isolation from Odonian struggle in A-Io (Freedman, 2000: 124–125; Hamner, 2005).

Indeed, in A-Io Shevek is politicized by his involvement in this Odonian anti-colonial struggle, and the novel ends with his return to Anarres as a member of the revolutionary 'Syndicate of Initiative' (accompanied by Ketho, an ambassador from the planet Hain), determined to organize against the forms of domination that have emerged on Anarres (which I discuss in further detail in the following chapter), and to forge connections with Odonians on Urras. Here, then, it is important to note that for Massey places are not just produced through intra-actions that do occur, but also by 'disconnections and . . . relations not established, the exclusions' (2005: 130). Borders (think of the Green Wall and *Code* 46's papelles) facilitate such disconnection and exclusion; and thus reduce the capacities of places to become otherwise through intra-acting with events, places and actors that occur beyond them, potentially forcing them to turn back to (supposedly) 'authentic' internal essences (1999).

The challenges faced by musical improvisation and education are not directly analogous, but the message to be taken here is that they are likely to be most utopian—both internally, and in their effect on the world beyond their immediate spatiotemporality—when they connect with broader political struggles occurring within their milieu, as well as with struggles that have affinity elsewhere in the world. Such connections help them to remain open to new practices, challenges and debates, rather than bounding themselves off in the belief that they are already sufficiently 'good.' These connections are perhaps more commonly found in improvised music in what George Lewis (1996) refers to as the 'Afrological' tradition than they are in the 'Eurological' tradition. His book *A Power Stronger than Itself* details such connections throughout the history of the Association for

the Advancement of Creative Musicians, a long-running Black musicians' collective founded in Chicago (but with reach across North America). He notes its foundation in the struggle against white supremacy and its various engagements with working class struggles and feminism across the five decades of its existence (Moten, 2003; cf. Monson, 2007; Lewis, 2008; Fischlin et al., 2013).

The imbrication of temporality and spatiality becomes particularly clear when borders are considered: closing off space closes off time, just as to refuse any future in the name of utopia achieved closes off the possibility of expanding good intra-actions in the here-and-now. Utopia should, as far as possible, remain unbordered. Yet this 'as far as possible' is important, and there are problems with a blanket rejection of borders (and their close relations, boundaries) that need to be explored further. Whilst the borders of nation states are clearly violent technologies that can have no place in a utopian world (King, 2016), Noel Castree offers a sympathetic critique of Massey's claim that places must always seek to connect with the outside world. Many Indigenous communities, he notes, often seek separation from—and closure to—settler colonialism and capitalism, which continue to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their cultures, means of production and cosmologies (2004: 158–159). In such circumstances, to 'lock out' is not simply an act of 'locking in,' but rather of allowing that which is 'in' to thrive—or even survive: to return to Harvey we can say that a degree of closure is needed in order that an internal openness might be cultivated (Harvey, 2007: 117–148). Parallels might be drawn here with the use of safe(r) spaces policies advocated and utilized in both education (Hardiman et al., 2007; Holley & Steiner, 2007) and—less frequently—in musical improvisation (Bramley, 2013), which set boundaries designed to 'lock out' particular kinds of behaviour (and, on occasion, people who refuse accountability for such behaviour) in order to reduce the risk of dominations emerging. Whilst such tactics are frequently accused of being part of a reactionary politics in which 'difficult' ideas are excluded, such claims are (often willful) misreadings. As Sara Ahmed notes:

> The aim is to enable conversations about difficult issues to happen: so often those conversations do not happen because the difficulties people wish to talk about end up being re-enacted within spaces, which is how they are not talked about. For example conversations about racism are very hard to have when white people become defensive about racism: those conversations end up being *about those defences rather than about racism*. We have safe spaces *so* we can talk about racism not so we can avoid talking about racism!
>
> (2015: feministkilljoys.com)

In this sense, then, borders and boundaries can play an important role in utopianism, even if their presence is tolerated only strategically. There is no one size fits all solution here and, as with so much about this form of utopianism, perhaps the best answer is one that worked out in struggle.

Utopianism and Utopia

So far, this chapter has outlined how the common good plays an active role in the production of space, the articulation of which produces it as place. Here, then, we have utopia as 'good place': a dynamic form resulting from and re-producing intra-actions. This is clearly a very different kind of utopianism from understandings that position it as the top-down imposition of a (supposedly) 'Good place' on an empty/inert/chaotic container of space. In such understandings utopianism is oriented to the establishment of such a Good place, with the capacities and agencies of space, matter and bodies ignored, unnoticed or understood as a hindrance. As outlined here, however, utopia does not call utopianism into being through a representation of what should be, *but is the result of utopianism.* This utopianism is not oriented to what should be, but is an exploration of what could be. It cannot be known or predicted in advance—think of Coleman's claim that 'before [his group] start[s] out to play, we do not have any idea what the end result will be'—because the good emerges through immanent intra-actions, and because we do not yet know what a (utopian) body can do. In this, there is an element of anti-anti-utopianism at the heart of utopianism. As for Jameson, utopia(nism) succeeds through its failures, but this isn't an imaginal failure/success: it is a material-spatial one.

This utopianism is a form of prefigurative utopianism, but it is doubly/infinitely so, for it is not prefigurative of any final form but rather of further prefiguration. We might paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari's definition of immanence to state that it is 'prefigurative only to itself, and leaves nothing to which it could be prefigurative' (1994: 45). Such utopianism has no 'Ultimum,' no secret 'end of history' towards which it inexorably unfolds. It will never reach a state of beatic redemption. Like the Mephi's flight out of OneSpace or Kabakov's Man out of his apartment, such utopianism does not know where it is going; but unlike those flights it is a process of place-making, rather than an attempt to flee from place. It makes its flight create. And as Out of the Woods demand, that flight creates 'Utopia Now!,' although the cry of 'No Future' is replaced by the immanent unfolding of that future from the present.

Notes

1. I would suggest that analyzing these improvisatory moments immanent to other forms of musicking may well be productive and were I pushed on a definition of musical improvisation I would tentatively draw on Marie Thompson's (2017) use of the term 'noise music' to refer to forms of musicking that foreground the improvisation present in musical performance.
2. It has also been widely associated with anarchism (Hegarty, 2012; Adlington, 2013: 97–136; Carter in Jacobson, n.d.; Harper, 2010; Bell, 2014) and—less frequently—with autonomist marxism (Gilman-Opalsky in Gruntfest, 2014; Moten, 2003; in Harney & Moten, 2013: 152; Bell, 2014).

Moten's 'association' in the latter comes here in response to a question about the relevance of autonomist marxism for his work, and is worth quoting at length:

> somebody might read George Lewis's book on AACM [Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians] and say, "well, this has to be understood in a general framework that associates it with the autonomist movement," or something like that—and that would be an important, maybe, intellectual connection to make, and somebody could make it, and I think that would be cool. But, the bottom line is I think a whole lot of that kind of work of acknowledging a debt intellectually is really predicated on a notion that somehow the black radical tradition is ennobled when we say that the autonomists picked something up from it. It's as if that makes it more valuable, whereas it doesn't need to be ennobled by its connections to autonomist thought. Rather, what's at stake is the possibility of a general movement that then gets fostered when we recognize these two more or less independent irruptions of a certain kind of radical social action and thinking.

It is such a 'general movement' that this book seeks to identify.

3. The forms of education I draw on here—and the methods they employ—operate under various labels, including utopian pedagogy (Coté et al., 2007); radical democratic education (Amsler, 2015); critical pedagogy (Darder et al., eds., 2009; Giroux, 2011; Luke et al., eds., 1992); popular education (Torres, 1992; Kane, 2000; Westerman, 2005); (anarchist) free schooling (Antliff, 2007; Motta, 2012); critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003); place-based pedagogy (Woodhouse, 2001; Smith, 2007); Indigenous, Indian or 'Red' pedagogy (Semali & Kincheloe, eds., 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Grande, 2015); EcoJustice education (Martusewicz et al., 2014); anarchist education (Suissa, 2009); folk education (Horton, 2003); and ecopedagogy (Kahn, 2010).

4. Residents of Anarres consider it to be a planet rather than a moon and refer to Urras as the 'moon.' Given descriptions of the two bodies, however, it seems likely that Anarres is the moon of Urras (2006: 36).

5. 'Place-making' as I use it here should not be conflated with the current trend for 'placemaking' in regeneration projects, where often it refers to little more than the use of apolitical (sometimes participatory) art projects to tran. This 'place-making' often re-inscribes a binaristic opposition between 'space' as unruly/inert (and thus unattractive to capital investment) and 'place' as rich and full of meaning (and thus open to investment). When used in this way, place-making (and place) are little more than weapons in the gentrifier's toolkit. My use relates more closely to concepts such as 'spatial practice' found in many post-Lefebvrian geographies.

6. This is, of course, necessarily simplified: no such chain of causality could ever be assembled with any degree of certainty from an actual improvisation given the intra-active entanglement of agency (Barad, 2007; Borgo, 2012): an entanglement that moves improvisation further away from liberalism by refusing to assign agency to individual subjects. Yet it serves to illustrate the basic point: immanent intra-actions increase the capacity of improvising bodies to affect and be affected.

7. This does not mean, of course, that specialist knowledge should be shunned. Bakunin is instructive here:

> Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure. (1953: 33)

8. Le Guin and the Anarresti also associate freedom with the individual on occasion. See Bell, 2016: 142–143 for further discussion of this.

9. Despite my referencing them together here, Cohn (2006) makes a number of important critiques of Chantal Mouffe's work (largely focusing on that co-authored with Ernesto Laclau). Indeed, as an anarchist his belief that dissensus can and should occur against the state and representation are opposed to Mouffe's, who argues for the reform of state institutions such that a better form of representative democracy might be produced (see Mouffe in Đorđević & Sardelić, 2013).

10. I am reminded here of Colin Ward's claim that 'the most individualistic people I have known have been people who rejected ideologies of individualism, and firmly believed in communist anarchism. I don't say this as a joke but as an everyday observation' (Ward & Goodway, 2003: 26–27).

11. Perhaps animated by similar concerns, Jonathan Roffe (2007) uses the term 'dividual' to designate both the divided nature of the subject and its immersion and reproduction in the social field; and argues that this figure has a particular utopian charge. Oddly, Roffe does not reference Deleuze's use of the term in his essay on the control society, although he does point to Deleuze's books on cinema, although he notes that here the term 'speaks to a slightly different point' (2007: 49 n. 7). And whilst he references texts in which Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'schizo-revolutionary' he does not make reference to the term itself.

12. Latour does not use the term 'body,' but 'object' and 'subject.' This is inconsistent with the Deleuzeo-Spinozist use of 'body,' however.

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5 Rethinking the No-Good Place

'There are always problems, always ambiguities.'

(Moylan, 2014: 95)

Introduction: The Ambiguous Consistency of the No-Good

Utopia(nism) cannot just operate within and beyond the here-and-now, but must operate against it too. Indeed, it must operate against *any* here-and-now, even one (re)produced in ways that are far more in accordance with the common good than our current world is. In this chapter I want to explore the operation of this against by thinking through the 'no' of utopia's etymology and its intra-actions with the 'good' and 'place.' In a present so thoroughly dystopian as ours, this 'no' has two functions: an externally directed 'no' to the world as it exists; and an internally directed 'no' warning utopians that they cannot rest on their laurels, that there is no once-and-for-all establishment of 'the good place,' and that the joy of utopia must not be allowed to trump the very necessary operation of less explicitly 'positive' affects. As Spinoza notes, '[t]he emotions of hatred, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves . . . are equally deserving of our investigation as the properties of any other thing, whose mere contemplation afford us pleasure' (Spinoza, 1996: 165). This chapter is an attempt to provide such an investigation.

There are, of course, innumerable words written on whether this negating mode should take priority over affirmation. For some utopian studies scholars (Bloch, 1986; Moylan, 2008), it should. Others emphasize the priority of affirmation (Braidotti, 2013; many of the essays in Davis & Kinna, eds., 2010). Some readers might see the positioning of this chapter *after* the previous one as evidence that I take this latter position, and it is certainly true that I once did. Yet I have become increasingly ambivalent to this question, and once you get beyond fidelities to preferred (and often white, male) philosophers (Adorno therefore negation, Deleuze therefore affirmation; no, actually, that reading of Deleuze is wrong and we must focus on his negativity . . .), I suspect that the privileging of one or other of these modes is to a considerable extent determined by one's (lack of) structural privilege and personal histories; and, indeed, to how one feels in any given moment. Here, then, I generally follow

Kathi Weeks, who states that although the affirmative good and negating no are generally understood:

> as two separate functions, one deconstructive and the other reconstructive, their simultaneous presence transforms each of them . . . the "no" to the present not only opens up the possibility of a "yes" to a different future, it is altered by its relationship to that "yes"; the affective distancing from the status quo that might be enabled is different when it is paired with an affective attachment either to a potential alternative or to the potential of an alternative.
>
> (2011: 207)

In other words, whilst I have followed Weeks in theoretically and conceptually separating the affirmative (the good) from the negative (the no) in order that this book has a coherent structure, our affective lives do not have such linear narratives and coherent structures. Each affirmation is also a negation, each negation a potential affirmation.[1] And in this is one of the great values of the term utopia: as 'the no-good place' it allows us to name, simultaneously, the affirmative and the negative, giving preference to neither *and* thinking through how these modes produce place.

My claim here, then, is that the 'no' of 'no-good' does not negate the good but works in an 'ambiguous consistency' with it. It is a perturbation, rather than a destruction (Virno, quoted in Noys, 2010: 14; Thompson, 2017). Taken separately, the no and the good do very different things (hence the ambiguity at play here), but when they intra-act they take on a 'consistency' (as different ingredients take on 'consistency' in a cake) in which they complement, strengthen and sometimes conflict with one another to produce something greater than and different from the sum of their parts. Utopianism without the 'no' is complicity with the status quo; utopianism without the 'good' is critique, or anti-anti-utopianism.

Utopia(nism) against the World

The Co-option of Utopia(nism)

Utopianism may operate within the here-and-now but when judged from the perspective of the here-and-now it remains impossible. Post-utopian 'common sense' prevails, punctuated only by occasional spatiotemporalities of hope; and even where utopia is held to be a nice idea—a position rather in vogue as various institutions of the white middle class celebrate the 500th anniversary of *Utopia*—that is often all it is allowed to be: a 'nice' idea. Half an hour on the radio. Forty five minutes in an art gallery. An article in the weekend supplement. A lifestyle book. A quirky module at an elite university. In this, the hatred that utopianism must have for the way things are is lost, and utopia becomes little more than compensation or cruel optimism: a space-time

of retreat from the intolerable present, which 'recharges the batteries' such that this present becomes a little less intolerable (an oft-overlooked function of the heterotopia as outlined by Foucault [1998; cf. Thaemlitz, 2010]), or fosters a false expectancy that it will be overcome. It is reconciled with the present, and reconciliation with the present—or with this present, at least—is not utopian. Utopia is not a holiday destination.[2]

Indeed, there is considerable danger that utopianism might play more than a passive, reconciliatory role with the various dominations of the present: it might also be active in their (re)production. After all, capital and the state have—since the 1960s—been incorporating seemingly utopian practices and demands for their own ends, inverting them to the disadvantage of the collective subjects who made them: precarity, 'lean in' feminism, the dissolution of the welfare state, homonationalism, pinkwashing, creative capitalism, green-washing, consumerism and the conservative communitarianism of contemporary neoliberalism all draw on the utopianisms of dominated subjects (Virno, 2004: 110–111; Puar, 2007; Power, 2009; De Angelis, 2013; Foster, 2016); as do contemporary forms of control (Noys, 2010: 71).

Unsurprisingly, musical improvisation and 'radical' pedagogies have not escaped the attention of capital and the state; or have been shaped into modes potentially of benefit for them. In this, they can be understood as exemplary of the 'communism of capital,' in which utopian forms are put to work for capital through the exploitation of the 'general intellect'—the collective social, technological and imaginal knowledge of the multitude (Marx, 2015: 625–626), and are stripped of their critique of the present (Virno, 2004; Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007; Saladin, 2009; Brassier et al., 2010; Hegarty, 2012; Thomson, 2013). It is not uncommon, for example, to find reference to some form of radical experiment in education cited alongside Sir Ken Robinson, a British educational 'leader' (and advisor to the New Labour government), who argues that contemporary Western education is wedded to Fordist/Taylorist modes of production (and the attendant organization of space and time) and so fails to produce subjects well adapted for the 'creative' demands of post-Fordism, which exploits the collective capacities of the multitude's entire social existence (Ackerman, 2011; Schwarzin, 2012; Wheeler, 2012; Singh, 2015; Prentki & Stinson, 2016).[3] Musical improvisation is similarly understood as a process with much to offer capital:

> The 1996 annual report of the LEGO Corporation featured the top management team decked out as a jazz ensemble with the CEO, Kjeld Møller Pedersen, playing the saxophone. The CEO of LEGO used the occasion to highlight his belief and expectation that improvisation is an art form that needs to become the hallmark of all levels of management, beginning at the top.
>
> (Lewin, 1998: 38)

Pedersen is not the only one to make such a claim: many (largely uncritical) theorists of management and organization have extolled the potentials of

improvisation in a business context (for a very small sample, see Weick, 1998; Kubacki, 2008; Oakes, 2009; Cunha et al., 2011; more are discussed in Laver, 2013). The jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has argued that the 'lessons' of jazz can be applied to business (Marsalis & Ward, 2008), whilst a number of improvisers have established consultancies through which they impart the 'lessons' of improvisation to business 'leaders.' One—'Jazz Impact,' founded by improvising bassist Michael Gold—frames jazz (which is not synonymous with improvisation, but draws heavily on it) in the language of post-Fordist capital:

> Who would have thought that two seemingly disparate worlds—the world of Jazz and the business world—would have so much in common? The elements that create a successful jazz quartet are the same components critical for sustaining a highly effective business team. Good jazz and high performance business depend on creativity, agility, empathy and flexibility. The similarities don't end there. The business lessons of jazz focus on high performance teamwork, multitasking, cross-functional awareness, innovation and responsiveness to change. Jazz translates seamlessly across cultures and serves as a social model that can be leveraged to teach business the skills of collaboration.
>
> (jazz-impact.com)[4]

In an article on such consultancies, the critical improvisation studies scholar Mark Laver notes that the pursuit of profit distinguishes the goals of corporations from those of improvisation, which he frames (after Heble, Fischlin and Lipsitz) as 'democratic, humane and emancipatory.' Yet he states (incorrectly) that 'changes in ideological and economic regimes are necessarily incremental' and eschews radical structural transformation on the grounds that it is neither 'pragmatic' nor 'realistic.' Rather, he argues that the attention corporations pay to improvisation creates an 'opportunity for improvisers . . . to make their voices heard in the upper echelons of corporate power' (2013: criticalimprov. com), suggesting that they might persuade corporations to do more than simply seek profit.[5] This claim is echoed by those who utilize radical approaches to education for the development of (supposedly) ameliorative forms of capitalism, which seek to 'make the world a better place' by 'recogniz[ing] when a part of society is not working and . . . solv[ing] the problem by fixing the system, spreading solutions and persuading entire societies to take new leaps' (Prieto et al., 2012: 1–2; cf. critiques by Amsler, 2011; Canaan, 2013). Such claims are astonishingly naïve, and ignore the manner in which capitalists have frequently made recourse to 'ethics' and 'community' (even to the tropes of communism), not simply as a sop to their critics, but to further their power (Guilhot, 2007; Cremin, 2013).[6]

Anti-utopian technologies of the state have also sought to make use of improvisation and 'radical' education. The 'freedom' afforded by jazz improvisation has frequently been framed through liberal individualism and mobilized

for a nationalist American exceptionalism, in which the identity of jazz is held to be inseparable from the United States as a 'land of opportunity'; and in which the anti-racist struggles of Black jazz musicians are reduced to feel-good 'melting pot' liberalism, or reduced to evidence that the USA is eliminating racism (Hersch, 2001; Gac, 2005). These narratives have been mobilized both domestically—through the Lincoln Center's jazz programme under the conservative jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, for example—and internationally, through neo-colonial projects such as the Lincoln Centre's Doha 'jazz palace'; and through the use of 'jazz diplomacy' during the Cold War ('a Utopian dream come true,' as *Down Beat* magazine claimed [Monson, 2007: 114]) (Gac, 2005; Von Eschen, 2006; Laver, 2014). It should be noted, however, that jazz has a long and complicated history in relation to American nationalism: such projects are not simply 'corruptions' of an otherwise pure utopianism (Robinson, 2005). Radical forms of education, meanwhile, have been suggested as methods utilized for training the military (Toiskallio, 2009) and police (Rai, 2012); and are often deployed within elite learning institutions designed to reproduce the here-and-now (though this does not mean that struggle within these spheres is impossible, of course) (Cresswell et al., 2013).

Accordingly, it is not enough to celebrate the goodness internal to any given utopia: we must amplify the dissonance between that goodness and the world as is. Indeed, doing so may well strengthen the internal goodness of a given utopia, just as Anarres' utopianism is strengthened by Shevek's involvement in struggle in A-Io. So whilst I agree with Ajay Heble that improvisation is 'politically and materially pertinent to envisioning and sounding alternative ways of knowing and being in the world' (improvcommunity.ca), 'being in' the utopian world that improvisation actualizes within and beyond this world also entails being against this world (cf. Hancox, 2013). Utopianism makes the world impossible (cf. Moylan, 2008), its three spatiotemporal modes—the within, the against and the beyond—mutually reinforcing one another. Utopianism is not simply a generative force creating new places, but is simultaneously a force of undoing, refusal and destruction: the 'activation of negativity as a practice of the necessary destruction of existent positivities' (Noys, 2010: 14).

The experience of a utopia not only educates our desire about how the world could be but estranges us from the world as it is. That estrangement frequently resonates with pre-existing alienation from the world and is deeply affective, rather than being solely 'cognitive,' as much utopian studies scholarship asserts. Once, when, being interviewed with a record of his playing in the background, Duke Ellington—who utilized significant amounts of improvisation in his performances—asked that the needle be reset so a particular dissonant chord could be heard again. 'That's the negro's life,' he said. 'Hear that chord. That's us. Dissonance is our way of life in America. We are something apart, yet an integral part' (Ellington, 1993: 150). That dissonance persists today, as Sara Ahmed succinctly puts it in an article on the experiences of transgender people '[w]e learn about worlds when they do not accommodate us,' she writes. 'Not being accommodated can be pedagogy' (2016: 22).

It is this exclusion—and the attendant anger, pain, fear and disgust that can bind bodies together in the common of solidarity—which operates against the force of a third, hostile body: the world that does not accommodate (Mohanty, 2003: 17). There are clearly a number of features of the contemporary world that utopia(nism) must operate against, but here I want to focus on four key structuring forces through which the here-and-now is (re)produced: the state, capitalism, identity and colonialism.

Utopia(nism) against the State

In 2015, I presented a paper outlining some aspects of my approach to the utopian. Following the question and answer session a utopian studies scholar told me that they agreed with almost everything I said (a claim they may no longer wish to stand by, should they have read this far!), but that they could not agree with my rejection of the state, which—they argued—was a necessary—and useful—vehicle for utopian transformation. This is not an unusual claim, of course: it is central to many marxisms, as well as to a variety of other positions that may align themselves with utopianism.

The state has undoubtedly been a vehicle for transformation and it would be foolish to decry the benefits of—and to refuse to fight for—welfare states, universal healthcare and social housing. Nor would I recommend simply ignoring the complexities of the cramped spaces that the state can provide for social transformation. Recent years, meanwhile, have seen an upsurge in associations of utopianism—or at least hope—with the state form (Fisher, 2012; McManus, 2015; Dean, 2016). The so-called 'Pink Tide' in South America, which saw the election of socialist or social-democratic Presidents in Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil in the first decade of the twenty-first century; the series of struggles and revolutions in North Africa and the Arab Peninsula in 2010–2011; the 'hopeful' election of Barack Obama as US President in 2008 (and, to a lesser extent, the 2015 election of Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party in Canada); the rise of populist left-wing parties across Europe, including Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain; the election of radical mayors in cities such as Seattle and Barcelona; and the unexpected emergence of Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders have all led to hopes that the state might be open to transformation by a utopian politics. There has also been increasing interest in previous failed, aborted, abandoned or cut-short 'utopian' experiments by states, including Allende's Chile's proposed cybernetic planned economy Project Cybersyn (Medina, 2011) and post-independence Tanzania's ujamaa system of decentralized village co-operatives (Ibbott, 2014). Focusing on the future, meanwhile, a form of state-administered 'universal' basic income is widely being touted as the locus for a 'utopian' politics (Weeks, 2011; Srnicek & Williams, 2015).

There are certainly signs of hope in some of these state oriented movements, although the rise of far-right politicians, parties, rhetoric and policies should serve as a reminder that hope should not be conflated with optimism. I do not, however, think that such shifts are utopian. Indeed, I do not believe that

politics that revolve around the state are utopian. The state is a violent anti-utopian mechanism (Muñoz, 2009; Ramnath, 2011; Baker, 2015), which in part reproduces itself through the domesticating of utopianism. Utopianism does not capture the state, the state captures utopianism; and rather than making the present impossible, utopianism becomes the condition of the possible. At that moment it ceases to be utopianism.

The domestication of utopianism *may*, of course, have locally positive effects. Nor can it ever be total: there will always be a surplus that escapes capture by the state, and on occasion the state's engagement with utopianism may strengthen radical extra- or anti-statist elements. This is necessarily a generalization, too: the specificities of any particular (supposedly) utopian moment in a state's history must be attended to (Fernandes, 2010; Hancox, 2016; Kay & Goddard, 2016; Wilde, forthcoming). At times, those of us who invest in or advocate utopianism may wish to expend energy in politics that engages with these state forms: perhaps by voting for a party or candidate we believe will protect or further the interests of a particular body; protesting against their closure or privatization; or seeking to reform them. Yet my claim is that when we do so we are not being utopian: at least not directly. And this is fine—I do not wish to advocate for an absolutist utopian purity, nor to moralize against those who believe compromises to sometimes be necessary (though I do not accept that such compromises are what determines the political. We must forget Bismarck: politics is not 'the art of the possible' but the art of struggling over the possible). Even the most ardent utopian is sometimes a reformist: we all contain multitudes. But utopianism is not reformism and that is precisely its value. Here I am reminded of Vincent Geoghegan's claim that to uncouple utopianism from perfection is to 'lose [its] element of uncompromising marvellous otherness' (2007: 77): a claim perhaps more applicable to those who would compromise utopianism by investing it into the state.

Regardless of any potential gains from compromising with the state, the most ardent utopian cannot overlook—or tolerate—the state's disciplinary, controlling and violent anti-utopianisms: manifest in the mutually reinforcing forms of, for example, police violence (Mars, 2002; Power, 2013; Mitrani, 2014; Williams, 2015); the militarization of the everyday (Graham, 2011; Scheper-Hughes, 2014); the criminal justice system and incarceration (Gilmore, 2007; Loyd et al., eds., 2012; Stanley & Smith, eds., 2015); state borders (Anderson et al., 2009; Jones, 2012; Loyd et al., eds., 2012; Walia, 2013; King, 2016) and evictions (Davis, 2006; Springer, 2013; Green et al., 2015). These constitute a material anti-utopianism that shuts down spaces, movements, temporalities and relations from which alternatives might develop; and which target those embodied identities identified as a threat to the current social order ((re)producing those identities in the process). They are thus attempts to control both space and time, ensuring 'security' and 'stability,' but inevitably (re)producing—and depending upon—insecurity and instability in the process (Abraham, 2009).

The state should not be (mis)understood simply as a geopolitical form imposed from above, however: it is a particular mode of relating. For Gustav

Landauer, '[w]e are the State and we shall continue to be the State until we have created the institutions that form a real community' (1910: 1). We should, then, not fetishize it as a 'thing' external to ourselves. He continues:

> One can throw away a chair and destroy a pane of glass, but those are idle talkers and credulous idolaters of words who regard the state as such a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to destroy. . . . The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another.
>
> (1910: 1)

For Virno, the multitude names these 'other relationships': it constitutes an ungovernable collectivity over which the state cannot exercise its decision-making power. Drawing on Thomas Hobbes and Carl Schmitt, he argues that the state requires a 'people': a collective form modelled on the Cartesian individual, and famously depicted on the frontispiece to Hobbes' *Leviathan* (Virno, 2004; cf. Gilbert, 2014). A similar point is made by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who riff off Hobbes' claim that 'war is against the State, and makes it impossible' (2004b: 394; cf. 2004b: 253) to develop their concept of a 'nomadic war machine,' the 'mode of a social state that wards off and prevents the State' (2004b: 394). It is my claim that the utopia(nism) outlined here constitutes such a social state: inasmuch as it exists makes the state impossible. Yet Deleuze and Guattari take us a step further here, for they note that this 'warding off' is never permanent: the state, as a relation, can never be defeated once-and-for-all but is immanent to all social organization (2004b: 524). It is this problem that I tackle in the second half of this chapter.

Utopia(nism) against Capitalism

A key aim of the state is to create the conditions for the accumulation of capital, and it should not be understood apart from capital's interests and agency; nor from the colonialism that ensues. Indeed, when the increasing privatization of security and the interests of security technology producers are taken into account the line between state and capital becomes particularly blurry (Hassine & Neeman, 2012), as seen in the state capitalism of OneState and in *Code 46*'s Sphinx Corporation. Many of these violent state technologies and processes are also designed to facilitate—or constitute—accumulation by dispossession and enclosure, through which the means of social reproduction (including land, resources and relationships) are removed from self-management by commoners, often such that those who previously existed with a degree of autonomy from capitalism and the state are forced to engage with them in order to, for example, earn money, care for dependents or access healthcare. Even where the process through which this occurs is not directly violent, its outcomes very often are (Mies, 1987; Federici, 2004; Ezquerra, 2014).

Capitalism, then—understood as a mode of production in which capital functions as the principal means of production, and as an ideological and material system designed to reinforce this state of affairs—is wholly incompatible with utopianism. It requires state violence and colonial expansion for its perpetuation (Harvey, 1981) and is constituted by (rather than producing as epiphenomena) hierarchical systems of class, race and gender (Marx, 1976: 915; Anthias & Yuva-Davis, 1992; Federici, 2004; Sky Palace, 2012: 210); as well as the splitting of 'nature' from 'culture'—a move with disastrous ecological consequences (Moore, 2015; Out of the Woods, 2016). It forces people to sell their labour-power to survive, a process that subordinates them to bosses (and to the market), resulting in further separations from their capacities (Marx, 1844; Brown et al., 2006: 26).

Utopianism, then, must refuse complicity with capitalism so far as possible. Yet this is far from simple, for as outlined at the beginning of this chapter capitalism captures utopianism: it learns from it, incorporates it and defangs it, and simply saying that you are 'against' this does not stop the process. Education, musical improvisation and utopian literature can and do all play their own roles in (re)producing capitalism. Thus, whilst I disagree with Jodi Dean's Leninism and her faith in party and state as institutions for social change, I am attracted by her argument that we should use the term 'communism' to name our struggles (in this case, our utopianism), for 'communism' is the one formulation that capitalism struggles to incorporate. It is simultaneously affirmative (it names an alternative) and negative (it is 'the real movement that abolishes the present state of things') (Dean, 2012).

Yet communism is, of course, a loaded term. However good the arguments that much 'actually existing Communism' was a deformation of 'true' communist potential, or even that it was not *truly* communist but was a form of 'state capitalism' (Cliff, 1974; Gabriel et al., 2008), to insist on using the term may obscure more important arguments (where the debate fails to get beyond 'the meaning of "communism,"' further explication is foreclosed). Furthermore, whilst some people have made the argument that Indigenous cultures are compatible with if not examples of communism (Durham, 1993; Kesīqnaeh, 2015), others have argued that communism is an inherently colonial formation (Means, 1983). The question as to how the form of utopianism should be named (if at all) should therefore be kept open: a 'not yet' to be determined through struggle. Similar arguments could, of course, be had around the term 'utopia,' and I discuss these in the book's conclusion.

Utopia(nism) against Identity

In the previous chapter I argued that utopianism within our world cannot operate on a *tabula rasa*, but must engage with actually existing material conditions. Part of this is understanding that people do not and cannot leave the identities that are (re)produced by and (re)produce capitalism behind when they enter a utopian space within the here-and-now. Yet given that these identities are often

sources of oppression, should utopianism not work against them at least as much as it works with them? The Edu-Factory Collective, for example, suggest that radical education should cultivate forms of knowledge that 'disarticulate' the subject and then 'compose' it along new lines,[7] suggesting that 'refusal [to follow predetermined identities] is the full affirmation of the autonomous subject' (2009: 13). Ellen Waterman, meanwhile, expresses an ambivalence about claims to a 'specifically feminine *jouissance*' in musical improvisation, stating that whilst it makes audible the existence of the feminine (and possibly the queer, racialized and classed) as an active agent in improvisation, it also risks 'essentializing the feminine (albeit strategically)': locking it into a pre-existing set of possibilities that deny womens' capacity to become (2008: criticalimprov.com).

It is also important to consider identities that are (re)produced not through their being oppressed, but through their complicity in oppression: heterosexuality, masculinity and whiteness, in particular. These are often understood as 'non-identities': the norms from which 'identities' differ (Carabine, 1996; Ahmed, 2007; Sarkar, 2015). Their power operates precisely through their invisibility, making their dismantling (as loci of privilege) particularly tricky, for to dismantle them requires naming them, which in turn risks reproducing them (Ahmed, 2007). This is a risk worth taking, however, for by making reference to the manner in which they (re)produce the present, their potential to reduce that capacity remains.

One of the most influential critics of what is often termed 'identity politics'—the organization around identities held to suffer oppression and marginalization—is Wendy Brown, who argues that it leads to demands for 'recognition' from forces of domination; and that it leads to a 'logics of pain' that 'reproach[es] power rather than aspires to it' and 'disdain[s] freedom rather than practic[ing] it' (Brown 1993: 390). She claims that it therefore becomes 'deeply invested in its own impotence' through 'wounded attachments' to identities that are markers of powerlessness, and to the 'wounds' through which such identities are (re)produced. This then leads to 'vengeful moralizing,' as those identifying with their identities lash out at those they see as perpetuating their oppression (a move which relies on them identifying with their oppression in the first place) (Brown 1995: 70). Furthermore, Brown argues that these subjects experience a peculiar kind of pleasure from their powerlessness: the 'bad' pleasure of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. There are important elements to this critique, not least when demands around identity find their limit in the state. Yet as I will argue below, this criticism of 'identity politics' contributes to a climate in which attempts to tackle domination—including sexual abuse—are framed as 'reactionary.' Furthermore, it is important not to conflate power with domination: to reproach the latter does not mean that one cannot aspire to the former and is, indeed, a necessary component of doing so. It is also important to differentiate between 'identity politics' that sees recognition as its goal and that which sees it as insufficient (if sometimes necessary) (Fraser, 2000; Coulthard, 2014: 66; Phipps, 2014).

Further issues arise from contemporary 'post-identity' positions drawing on Afro-Pessimism, queer theory, and marxist-feminism. In 'No Selves to Abolish,' K. Aarons makes the case against 'identity politics' by starting from the perspective of the former, which, they state, argues that organizing around the commonalities between differently oppressed groups is an impossible tactic for Black subjects, who, living in a state of 'social death' in which they are held to have no relation with humanity (which is constituted through their continued exclusion), are not granted entry to a world in which such affinities might register. This is an important point, and serves to remind us that we should not seek to draw false equivalences between different categories of oppression (Wildersen, 2010). Instead of a politics of autonomously realizing the currently denied capacities of oppressed groups (understood as a positive difference), they argue for 'self-abolition,' in which oppressed groups work to abolish their identities (understood as a source of domination). Such struggles would take place 'in parallel' rather than in common, although (like parallel lines in a non-euclidean space) these struggles do converge at a particular point—the desire to 'negate [aspects of] ourselves that might [then] free the way for us all to find something more powerful than the selves presently available to us [non-black subjects] and denied to them [black subjects]' (2016: 23). Aarons' explication of how such parallel struggles might proceed has obvious overlaps with the utopianism I am outlining here, for it is:

> oriented immanently around our own idea of happiness . . . the affective complicity and feeling of increased power that arises between people who . . . act together to polarise situational conflicts in pursuit of ungovernable forms of life, in whatever experimental forms this might take in the present.
>
> (2016: 23)

These collectivities can thus be understood through the form of the multitude, but it is clear that the power of the 'common' at the heart of the multitude is limited: quite simply, there are *not* the commonalities between different subject positions from which a coherent, viable multitudinous collective identity can currently be forged.

Aarons suggests that a variety of marxist-feminists, communization theorists and queers make similar arguments and embody this practice, arguing that what they share

> is the assumption that an overcoming of the existing conditions of suffering and exploitation will ultimately require not a valorisation, empowerment, or even autonomisation of presently existing oppressed subject positions, but rather the simultaneous abolition of the conditions of oppression and the social relations and the identities they produce: the liquidation rather than the consolidation and empowerment of identity.
>
> (2016: 18)[8]

The word 'ultimately' is key here, however, for it acknowledges that the abolition of identities is not possible in the present moment. This is taken up in one of these quoted texts, by Sky Palace, who unsettle the binary opposition between autonomization and abolition. On the one hand they state that their 'vision of liberation assumes not equality between genders, sexualities, and races, but the abolition of these identity categories as structural relations that organize human activity and social life.' Yet they acknowledge that this abolition must come around through autonomy, arguing that 'we believe in the necessity of autonomous organizing on the basis of materially produced categories, such as "trans," "queer," "woman," "POC," et cetera.,' calling for 'a renewed interrogation of the relationship between autonomy and abolition, in which self-organization based on identity categories is understood as a necessary part of the abolition of these categories' (2012: 213).

Here, the critique of Matthijs Krul is pertinent. For him, 'it should be clear that one cannot have a "real movement that abolishes the present state of things" that is not in some way part of that present state of things and remakes them within the confines of its present mediations—something that cannot be overcome by sheer force of will.' Questions about the relationship between particular identities and dominations may be the right ones to ask, suggests Krul, but all they can do is produce a 'known unknown'—something that we recognize must change, but where the nature of such change cannot be determined in advance. 'Perhaps,' he notes, the answer is 'not yet' (2014: thenorthstar.info).

Of course if the answer is 'not yet,' then it is not yet possible to say what identities might yet do and thus problematic to assume they need to be 'liquidated.' It is certainly true that many contemporary classifications function as forms of domination, but such forms of domination always-already contain immanent resistance to that domination (often organizing around that identity); and it does not follow that *all* such classifications across space and time necessarily function as forms of domination (with the exception of class, where hierarchy is inherent to the definition rather than the material reality). Indeed, it has been argued that attempts to simply 'abolish' identity themselves constitute a form of colonialism, because in assuming that identity is necessarily a locus of domination there is ignorance of Indigenous and non-Western identities that may serve as loci of empowerment. It is also frequently used as a cover for transphobia (Phoenix, 2015).

It is perhaps useful to follow Jasbir K. Puar's argument that we should think in terms of assemblage rather than identity, then (or, perhaps, identity-as-assemblage). For her, assemblage names a dynamic grouping of particular qualities, bodies, behaviours and traits, signifiers that produce what is commonly understood as 'identity'—some of which go beyond the present, some of which are complicit with it (there is, as I understand it, no reason why this should be limited to the queer). As particular aspects of identity are incorporated by forces of domination, new lines of flight from domination are composed. There is no question of demanding recognition for an identity, because

identity cannot be pinned down. There is, as Muñoz reminds us, no such thing as a 'fully queer' subject, because we know not yet what queerness might be. A similar understanding underpins Sargisson's concept of femininity (Sargisson, 1996; cf. Braidotti, 2003; Muñoz, 2009). The utopian project is therefore not one of fleeing from fixed identities but working from and with unfinished, fluid assemblages.

Utopia(nism) against Colonialism

In an important article, Karl Hardy (2012) argues that utopia needs to be 'unsettled' such that its historic imbrication with colonialism is examined. This is framed as a two-way movement, in which utopianism itself is unsettled, and then plays a role in a political project of unsettling, or decolonization. With the 500th anniversary of the publication of More's *Utopia* marked by largely uncritical celebrations of the work and with settler colonialism an ongoing process, such an argument is clearly as urgent as ever. This book has sought to contribute to such an unsettling by making reference to utopianism's complicity in colonialism and by drawing on Indigenous and decolonial approaches to think through a concept of utopia opposed to the hylomorphic modes of thought central to colonialism. Yet this is insufficient: far from 'unsettling' utopianism it may, in fact, help to 'resettle,' by appeasing guilty consciences.

Here I want to think through the ramifications of this through a reading of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's important article 'Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor.' This criticizes the 'ease' with which settler subjects produce or call for 'decolonizing methods' that 'decenter settler perspectives.' All too often, they state, these are 'incommensurable with decolonization,' producing a 'settler move to innocence' through which settlers disavow their responsibility for colonialism ('look, I have a methodology that makes colonialism impossible, I am "unsettled" by colonialism') whilst simultaneously reproducing colonialism (through complicity in the occupation of stolen land). In this, they prematurely and 'problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity' (2012: 1).[9] Echoing arguments that degrees of commonality between struggles over/through/against identity are often overstated, they argue that decolonization must be understood as a 'distinct project' aimed at returning settled lands to Indigenous subjects.[10] Thus, decolonization 'cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks,' no matter how otherwise critical their content (2012: 3). Doing so can, in fact, be a form of 'settler appropriation,' in which Indigenous knowledges are understood as a 'resource' that theory and praxis can call on to solve complex problems (cf. Watts, 2013: 28).

Accordingly, for utopianism to avoid contributing to settler appropriation it needs to do more than draw on the theoretical and lived experiences of Indigenous subjects in order to present a 'superior' philosophy. It must commit to a politics, rather than simply a (metaphorical) ontology, of decolonization. This entails no less than 'the repatriation of lands simultaneous to the recognition of

how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted.' It is only in this that 'decolonization is necessarily unsettling' (2012: 8).

It is particularly unsettling because we do not yet know what it will entail. For Tuck and Yang, recognizing the incommensurability of decolonization with other struggles entails holding off all too easy 'reconciliatory' visions of how an unsettled society might function, not least because answers are not possible: utopia is produced by utopianism, not the other way round, and its job must not be to 'reassure' privileged (settler colonial) subjects that 'everything will be ok.' 'Still,' they say:

> [W]e acknowledge the questions of those . . . settlers who want to know what decolonization will require of them. The answers are not fully in view and can't be as long as decolonization remains punctuated by metaphor. The answers will not emerge from friendly understanding, and indeed require a dangerous understanding of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics—moves that may feel very unfriendly. But we will find out the answers as we get there.
>
> (2012: 35)

Here, too, we come to the anti-anti-utopianism at the heart of a decolonial utopianism. We cannot know what a utopia might be: the details must emerge through struggle.

Utopia(nism) against Itself

Joy as Coercion

In a pair of essays published in 2015, Mark Fisher (2015a, 2015b) theorized then-current developments on 'the left' across Europe and beyond through the Spinozist concept of joy. [11] The left, he suggested, was finally learning what it is to collectively create the conditions of existence; and what a wondrous, self-perpetuating process this could be. Drawing further on Spinoza, he argued that to be successful this mobilization should not organize around hope, but 'confidence.' For him, hope is too inflected with doubt. It is too cautious, too wary of obstacles to success and is thus doomed to succumb to these obstacles. Confidence, by way of contrast, is a 'hyperstitional' performance: an action that creates its own truth, and creates the world through this truth. It 'immediately increases the capacity to act, the capacity to act increases confidence, and so on—a self-fulfilling prophecy, a virtuous spiral' (Fisher, 2015a). This, Fisher suggests, can be cultivated through the democratic collectivities of the left.

Confidence is undoubtedly produced between (rather than within) subjects in the most ecstatic space-times of utopia(nism): those occasions when it feels as if a multitude is on the verge of 'going to infinity and beyond, as if it is bending reality (of which it is a part) through its intra-actions, (re)producing

utopia at great speed. Everything clicks. Everything is in flow. *This is good.* We encountered this in the previous chapter.

Yet as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, the world is not always speedy; and I also outlined the importance of dissensus in the previous chapter. We must, therefore, attend to slowness too; to the moments when our intra-actions do not 'flow' so easily—at least not for everyone—but come up against blockages, stoppages and leaks. Operating with 'confidence' in the face of a world that is hostile to your survival—never mind your flourishing—and in radical spaces that often (re)produce this hostility (because domination is never external to any social form) is simply not possible for many subjects; and whilst confidence can undoubtedly be strategically deployed it must not be made into a compulsion. Indeed, on occasion it is important to think through precisely why some subjects—though they may be hopeful—cannot be confident; to consider, with Sara Ahmed, 'how it feels to be stressed by the very forms of life that enable some bodies to [confidently] flow into space' (2010: 12).

Such power relations, I contend, will persist even in a utopia(nism) that operates at the level of totality: the State form is, as I have noted, immanent to all social formations: domination is not simply the result of the 'king in his central position, but [of] subjects in their reciprocal relations; not [of]sovereignty in its one edifice, but [of] the multiple subjugations that take place [and thus make place] and function within the social body' (Foucault, 2004: 27). This cautions us to be alert to the presence of insidious, informal acts of domination—even within ostensibly non-hierarchically organized places—'through performative disciplinary [or controlling] acts in which the protagonists may not even be conscious of their roles' (Gordon, 2008: 52). In other words, there can be no realm of unfettered freedom and power-with: freedom will *always* be contingent upon circumstance (May, 2011). If utopianism does not attend to this then it is reduced to the fanciful (and dangerous) impossibility that it is colloquially held to be. Hyperstition becomes little more than magical voluntarism: a willing up of confidence when the material conditions for it simply do not exist.

The hyperstitional ontology of confidence works the other way too, such that those who articulate their unhappiness are blamed for causing the problems they point out: they are the dissonant note that spoils everyone else's harmony. By saying that a place is no good they are held to produce that place as no good. The no kills the good. Combining this with an exaggerated and over-applied reading of Wendy Brown, in which this articulation is understood to seek the pleasure that derives from resentful moralizing, an 'enemy within' is identified: the subject whose constant naysaying stymies utopianism (whilst, apparently, reproducing their own moral purity) (Fisher, 2013; Laboria Cuboniks, 2015; Srnicek & Williams, 2015: 8). They are held to 'vampirically' drain power-with from struggle in order to reproduce their own personal power (Fisher, 2013). Yet it is likely they who feel domination most profoundly, and it is difficult to see this position as anything other than 'a reactionary politics that blames the less powerful for the loss of enjoyments previously regarded as entitled' (Flood, 2014; cf. Cautioulsy Pessimistic, 2013; Filar, 2013; Mitropolous, 2013).

The logical spatial consequences of this argument are made clear by Nick Nesbitt in an article critiquing the extremes of Nietzschean affirmation in Deleuze's thought (which perhaps overlooks some of the subtleties in Deleuze, albeit that these are less frequently quoted, and that Deleuze did not raise them consistently[12]). Suggesting that Nietzsche cannot be so neatly disentangled from the fascism he influenced, he warns of an ' "apartheid" logic' (Nesbitt 2005: 93), through which so 'long as there are "others" who are deemed the carriers of "negative" affects, others who might "sully" us with their negativity,' the 'cities we might construct' will 'be the ghetto of a race of affirmative "supermen" ' (Nesbitt 2005: 92). He suggests that only 'in a total (future) context' (Nesbitt 2005: 94) can pure affirmation be imagined (although, as I have argued, this is precisely what we *cannot* imagine).

The Killjoy as Utopian Subject

Whilst fidelity to Spinoza is not my particular interest here, it is also worth noting that the maximization of Spinozist joy does not occur through a disavowal of negative affects, but rather through engaging with them (Spinoza, 1996; Ruddick, 2010; McManus, 2011). In order to do this, and to avoid constructing utopia as a place from which privileged 'aristocrats' might peer down on lesser beings, here I turn to think through the naysaying agency of the 'killjoy' as theorized by Sara Ahmed. Through her, it is possible to think of them as—potentially, at least—utopian subjects. Their joy-killing 'no' does not kill the 'good' but (potentially) catalyzes the ambiguous consistency of affirmation and negation that in fact sustains the good and keeps place open, creating an intra-active circulation between the good, the no and place. Dissonance is productive not just of musical but social forms (Heble, 2000).

Accepting the killjoy as a subject of vital importance for utopia(nism) means rejecting the straightforward distinction between 'good and bad feelings that presumes bad feelings are backward and conservative and good feelings are forward and progressive' such that '[b]ad feelings are seen as oriented toward the past, as a kind of stubbornness that "stops" the subject from embracing the future,' whilst '[g]ood feelings are associated with moving up, as creating the very promise of a future' (2010: 216–217). Indeed, for Ahmed it is the 'good' that may well be stuck in the past, which is reproduced as a structuring force in the present through what—taking a phrase from Wilde—I refer to as the 'tyranny of habit' (1891: marxists.org). Those who enter a place following the ossification of these supposed 'goods' are then 'bound by what has already been established as good' (2010: 153, cf. 56–57). The state form emerges: the utopia becomes dystopia. Utopia(nism), then, cannot simply see the enemy as external to itself but must operate against itself. As Tom Moylan puts it, utopians must:

> [r]emember to be historically vigilant, do not lock in the utopian achievements, do not remove the social utopia from the processes of time. Don't cut a deal with the false utopian devil of your own collective imagination

as it dreams of the end of history; and don't cover up the deal by changing . . . from place-in-process to [a place] of eternal delight.

(2000: 15)

The consequences of failing to be vigilant in musical improvisation are succinctly described by Scott Thomson, who notes:

> A . . . thorough (and realistic) analysis . . . must acknowledge how 'authoritarian' gestures threaten the musical and social well-being of a performance. . . . The fluidity of authority within a group can be easily circumscribed by gestures that fix social power in a domineering or negligent way; the good faith that a group works to establish as a foundation for responsible and responsive play is under constant threat of being demolished in this way. Authoritarianism, from my own experience as a performer and listener, is commonly exemplified by a player's inability or unwillingness to listen to the other members of an ensemble, often coinciding with his or her unresponsive, soloistic musical contributions. This type of musical activity constitutes a very basic authoritarianism in which the player effectively suggests that 'I have nothing to learn from you, but you have something to learn from me.'
>
> (2007)

The 'inability or unwillingness' of certain musicians to participate in the operation of the common good threatens the operation of that common good, reintroducing as it does oppositions between the power of their musicking body and the power of other musicking bodies. 'Soloing' in this instance is an enclosure of skill: a showing off of 'individuality' rather than individuating becoming with the multitudinous collective. It is an attempt to control the improvisation and can dramatically reduce the power-with of musicking bodies.

It may not, however, be done deliberately or knowingly. Such acts are frequently the result of inexperienced improvisers who are unaccustomed to the intense processes of listening that successful collective improvisation requires (Higgins & Campbell, 2010; Clark, 2012). Domination can also emerge through the tyranny of habit, as practices that once increased power-with become unsurprising, predictable and safe. This is particularly likely to be the case within particular scenes rather than within specific performances. The guitarist Michael Rodgers, for example, describes a long-running improvisation workshop run by Eddie Prévost: 'in its early years [it] was diverse, lively and full of risk and debate. By about 2004/2005 it started feeling more like a church, where one must avoid offence and observe ritual. A hegemony was replacing a much more vibrant state of being' (quoted in Clark, 2012: 38). More troublingly, operations of domination occur through the coding of improvisation as a masculine, heterosexual practice, meaning that women queer and gender non-conforming are invisibilized and, subsequently, are less likely to get involved in improvisation scenes (Myers, 2002; Oliveros, 2004; Smith,

2004; Tucker, 2004, 2008; Lewis, 2008: 459–460). This prevents improvisation from realizing its utopian potential.

Pointing out these operations can be understood as a form of joy-killing: they constitute a refusal to 'go along' with events in order to 'keep things in the right place' (Ahmed, 2010: 59); and 'expose the bad feelings' that would otherwise have remained 'hidden, displaced, or negated under public signs of joy' (2010: 65). Those who do so, then, are 'affect aliens'—they are out of kilter with the affective economy of the places they experience. Yet the affect alien is both imaginative and productive, expressing an 'interest in what lies beyond the familiar' (2010: 61). In this figure, then, we find the ambiguous consistency of the 'no' and the 'good.' They seek to expand the capacity of bodies, unpicking tyrannies of habit and previously unnoticed dominations. At times Ahmed appears close to topophobic anti-anti-utopianism in describing such operations, with place functioning as a grid of imprisonment: the killjoy, for example, is animated by a 'refusal to be put back into place' (2010: 116). Yet this is actually a refusal to allow place to be utilized in this way, not a rebellion against place itself. The place in question becomes unstuck: it ceases to be a place that is no good (a bad place, a dystopia) and potentially, at least, becomes a place that is no-good; a place where the 'no' strengthens the 'good' rather than killing it or being subsumed by the operation of an oppressive 'joy.' Indeed, Julie Dawn Smith shows how the Feminist Improvising Group did precisely this through their 'queer' parodying of gender norms and their use of domestic objects such as 'vacuum cleaners, brooms, dustpans, pots and pans, and egg slicers—in Lindsay Cooper's words transforming "the sound of women's work into a work of women's sounds"' (2004: 235).

The role of killjoy is also adopted by Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989), who outlines how the supposed 'goods' of critical pedagogy can ossify into a set of myths with a repressive function in her account of developing and teaching an anti-racist module that drew on but reacted against critical pedagogy at an elite US university. She argues that all too often, claims to 'critical pedagogy' fail to properly interrogate the dynamics of power and identity within a classroom, instead falling back on concepts such as 'empowerment,' 'student voice,' 'dialogue' and 'critical,' which at best become meaningless and at worse obscure—and then prevent—the careful working through issues of power and identity. Here, these repressive myths function as a tyranny of habit, which allow those with particular privileges to (re)produce these within the classroom (largely, in the examples she draws on, unconsciously). Literature that celebrates these concepts, then, allows the operation of forms of education that reinforce, rather than challenge, hierarchical modes of relation. By moving beyond this to collectively interrogate these power relations (with students and teachers working together and sometimes against one another, including through joy-killing and naming the operation of whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity) it is, she suggests, possible to keep the classroom open to struggle and the operation of the common good.

The ossification of once good practices into tyrannies of habit on Anarres provides *The Dispossessed* with much of its narrative intrigue, and is primarily

illustrated through Shevek's relationship with Sabul, touched upon towards the end of the previous chapter. Given Anarres' supposed nonhierarchy, Sabul's 'seniority' should simply be a matter of age, but it is obvious to the reader (and eventually to Shevek) that he manipulates habits in order to informally dominate Shevek, whose unwavering faith in Anarres-as-utopia is a source of danger: preventing him from realizing (even the possibility of) Sabul's domination. This lack of awareness is furthered by the use of Pravic—the purpose-designed Odonian language used on Anarres—which leaves Shevek struggling to understand concepts of superiority and inferiority (Le Guin, 2006: 13). Sabul takes advantage of this, stating that 'this isn't some kind of hierarchy' in order to further Shevek's belief that it would be impossible for domination to occur (41).[13] Such moves mean that the good place is abstracted from the continued intra-action of the no-good: utopia as place is separated from the utopianism required to constantly (re)produce it. At this point, utopia becomes a tool of domination in the hands of the powerful.

It is Shevek's friend Bedap who first plays the role of affect alien on Anarres, noticing Sabul's behaviour and linking it to broader operations of domination. Initially, Shevek rejects his insights, repeating his faith in Anarres-as-utopia:

"What are you talking about, Dap? We have no power structure."

"No? What makes Sabul so strong?"

"Not a power structure, a government . . ."

"No. We have no government, no laws, all right. But as far as I can see, ideas were never controlled by laws and governments. . . . You can't crush ideas by suppressing them. You can only crush them by ignoring them. By refusing to think—refusing to change. And that's precisely what our society is doing! Sabul uses you where he can, and where he can't, he prevents you from publishing, from teaching, even from working. Right? In other words, he has power over you. Where does he get it from? Not from vested authority, there isn't any. Not from intellectual exchange, he hasn't any. He gets it from the innate cowardice of the average human mind. Public opinion! That's the power structure he's part of, and knows how to use. The unadmitted, inadmissible government that rules the Odonian society by stifling the individual mind."

(143–144)

Leaving aside his problematic essentialism ('the innate cowardice of the average human mind'), what is interesting is how Bedap explicitly figures these operations of power as forms of 'disaffection' and thinks them through the body, asking Shevek if he has ever thought about 'what the analogic mode calls "disease," social disaffection, discontent, alienation, that this might analogically also be called pain—what you meant when you talked about pain, suffering? And that, like pain, it serves a function in the organism?' (144). Here, Bedap moves towards figuring Anarres as a dystopia (a possibility floated by Ferns, 1999; Hamner, 2005; Plaw, 2005), but it is Shevek's (eventual) acceptance of this position that serves to keep Anarres open. It

informs his decision to join the Syndicate of Initiative—which seeks to re-invigorate Odonianism rather than have it function as a repressive myth—and to travel to A-Io. There, his engagement with Odonian struggle strengthens his resolve to struggle against domination on Anarres. Utopianism returns to wrestle back utopia for power-with from those who would use it for domination.

It is unfortunate, however, that Shevek is a white, heterosexual male (Delany, 2009). For Ahmed, affective alienation and joy-killing are bound up with nega-tive experiences of bad intra-actions that reproduce larger structures of power: she associates it with people of colour, women, migrants, queers and transgen-der subjects (2010, 2016; cf. Moylan, 2014: 44–45). Shevek, whilst suffering from domination on an intra-personal level that can be tied to broader opera-tions of power, is nonetheless not experiencing comparable oppression. In part it is difficult to criticize Le Guin too much here, because the whole point of Anarres is that it has moved beyond such wide-scale structural oppressions. Yet whilst it has seemingly done away with white supremacy, at least judging by the lack of reference to Anarresti concepts of race (it seems unlikely that race would never have been an issue given the persistence of colonialism on Urras), patriarchal heteronormativity remains; and there is nothing to suggest Shevek and his comrades (or Le Guin) recognize this.[14] In this regard, the prac-tices described by Ellsworth and Smith—which explicitly frame the renewal of utopian agency through killjoying by structurally oppressed subjects—are perhaps more exemplary here. We should not expect utopian transformation to come from those who benefit from privilege, but follow George Caffentzis' observation that often 'the seeming weakest and least productive can be the most powerful in a struggle' (2013: 129).

This claim should not be read as a guarantee, however. Queer and queer of colour histories remind us that killjoying does not allow for a linear progres-sion from the undesirable to the desirable, and it is important to avoid imposing 'happy endings' or some other form of narrative closure onto killjoying (Pre-ser, 2016). To impose a 'happy' ending on a previously unhappy episode is to 'move on' into a future that, because of this closure, is no future at all: merely a repetition of domination. Indeed, Le Guin cautions against reading *The Dis-possessed* as having a straightforwardly happy ending. 'It has an open ending,' she states. There is no resolution. '[I]t's quite possible that both Shevek and Ketho [the Hainish ambassador] will be killed on arrival by an angry mob. And it's only too likely that Shevek's specific plans and hopes for his people will come to little or nothing' (2005: 307).

Even where killjoying does result in a demonstrable shift, it should not be positioned as an 'interruption' to an otherwise smoothly operating process—an event that, so long as we all learn from, we can leave behind (Nguyen, quoted in Downes, 2012: 223), as the narrative of *The Dispossessed* 'learns' from the unhappy, angry queer Bedap before dispensing with him (Delany, 2009; Moylan, 2014: 87–114). The 'no' of the killjoy is not an interruption to

a process: it is an essential, intractable part of that process. It is also important to note that any such demonstrable shifts may not register immediately, and may not be registered at all by the killjoy. Indeed, if we attend to Le Guin's desire that *The Dispossessed* be read alongside other works set in the same fictional universe (2005: 307), then it is not unreasonable to believe that Shevek's actions, even if they do end in his death, increase capacities to affect and be affected—not just on Anarres but across the universe—for the Hainish go on to establish an anarchist intergalactic federation of planets (the 'Ekumen,' potentially inspired by Anarres' anarchism), which depends on the instant communication made possible by the ansible.

The Ambiguity of Evaluation

Having Done with the Judgment of God

The fact that there can be no guarantees regarding the futurity of killjoying attests to an important difference between claiming affect aliens for utopia(nism) and claiming utopia(nism) for affect aliens. The former move risks disavowing their complaint in the manner of neoliberal consultation: 'we have heard your complaint, and that is proof of our goodness' (followed, of course, by no action which suggests that the complaint *has* been heard; or at least understood and acted upon). Such a move allows utopia(nism) to mimic the consistency of the 'no' and the 'good' without attending to the ambiguities, complexities and traumas that the former brings with it, and without enacting the changes that such engagement demands. This is the situation on Anarres during the narrative of *The Dispossessed*. The emotional and affective labour of the killjoy is exploited by utopia.

Claiming utopia(nism) for affect aliens presents a theoretical problem, however. If utopia(nism) must privilege those who express some discontent within a utopia, does this not call into question the possibility of evaluating whether a particular place is or is not a utopia at a particular time? After all, those most affectively alienated by that place—those who organize around the 'no' rather than participating in its ongoing 'good'—are rather less likely to perceive of the place as a utopia. They may even articulate it as the dystopia immanent to all utopias.

Utopianism, then, is constituted by a second ambiguity, which operates at the level of articulation (it is this ambiguity that Avery Plaw, 2005, identifies in *The Dispossessed*'s subtitle). Given that places are *particular* articulations of spatial relations, no single articulation can be deemed sufficient. We can only know a place from a particular angle and across a particular timescale. There is no panoptic vantage point (spatial or temporal) from which a place—'real' or 'fictional'—might be surveyed in order to judge whether it is or is not a utopia. We must 'be done with the judgment of God' (Deleuze and Guattari, after Artaud, 2004: 166). Rather, an immanent form of continuously ambiguous evaluation is needed, taking into account messiness, complexity and

multiplicity (Duffy, 2017). It is clear, for example, that many inhabitants of Anarres perceive of it as a utopia. Others do not. Shevek, meanwhile, changes his mind as time progresses. He may well be (long) dead by the time his struggle comes to fruition (cf. Ross, 2015 on the strange temporalities of struggle and the fallacy of hasty judgement). There are undoubtedly many other articulations of Anarres to be made: some of these may suggest it is a utopia, others may emphasize its dystopian aspects. The tired adage that 'one person's utopia is another's dystopia' is entirely correct, with the necessary appendage that this is not simply a matter of taste, but rather of power: given the persistence of the nuclear family form and gendered divisions of labour on Anarres we can imagine, for example, that heterosexual male inhabitants might be more likely to articulate Anarres as a utopia than other, less privileged, inhabitants.

It is important, however, not to necessarily position utopia on the side of domination, such that it is always those who have historically lacked power who resist the label. Let us imagine, for example, that Shevek and his comrades in the Syndicate of Initiative are successful in challenging some of the hierarchies immanent to Anarres. Sabul—and others who benefit from these hierarchies—may very well respond to these changes by denouncing them for betraying the 'goodness' of Anarres, implicitly suggesting that these changes mean Anarres can no longer be articulated as a utopia. They may even utilize radical language in their arguments, claiming that structures put in place to mitigate against informal hierarchies constitute an assault of 'freedom.' It is precisely such forces of reaction that we find in so many contemporary arguments around 'free speech,' for example (Ahmed, 2015; Lees, 2015). Meanwhile, other subjects may not articulate a given place as a utopia because it is so alien to them and, perhaps, to their privilege: think, for example, of the manner in which settler subjects may be 'unsettled' (figuratively at first and perhaps literally later) by a utopianism oriented around decolonization. To such subjects, used to the sad joys of domination, this utopianism may feel dystopian.

Hearing Utopia

In order to explore this further I want to consider how listeners and critics—including myself—engage with the sonics of musical improvisation (shifting from the focus from the organization of performers to the organization of sound), in the knowledge that participation in improvisation does not end with the musicians but is also undertaken by listeners (Borgo, 2005; Harper, 2011). My approach here draws on Geoffrey O'Brien's claim that 'the knowledge that any music imparts is not necessarily of the world, or at least of this world. It is into other spaces, absent, imagined, seemingly infinite, that the hearer is initiated' (quoted in Street, 2012: 98). Drawing on this claim along with Greil Marcus' reading of Bob Dylan and The Band's *The Basement Tapes* and Benedict Anderson's concept of the imagined community, John Street (skeptically) explores how this geographical power of music plays a role in constructing

communal histories. Here, however, I want to consider what it might mean if the otherworldly places that music 'imparts knowledge of,' or even takes us to, exist in that utopian beyond. Specifically, I want to explore the places that listeners to black free improvisation might (not) find themselves in, and consider who might be able to articulate these places as utopian.

I was around seventeen when I first got into free jazz. And I mean, quite literally, got into it, for all of a sudden I fell headlong into places it conjured up (or that we conjured up between us). This took some doing, however: I had been struggling with it for a while, for although I could discern musical form and meaning in the arrhythmic breakdowns and diverse timbres of hard- and post-bop recordings, the chaotic formlessness of free jazz simply overwhelmed me. There was only the barest semblance of melody whilst timbres were harsh, abrasive and unforgiving. Dissonances abounded, and never resolved. I desperately scrambled around for form that could be imposed on this chaos but could find nothing. Nothing to hold onto. No standpoint from which I could orient myself. This was noise! Chaos! This music didn't take me to a place but to meaningless, formless space: a ghastly atopia.

Such judgements betrayed my whiteness. As George Lewis notes, the judgement of such music as noise

> can be seen as a holdover from antebellum days, when the music of black slaves, as historian Jon Cruz notes, "appears to have been heard by captors and overseers primarily as noise—that is, as strange, unfathomable, and incomprehensible." As Cruz points out, for slave owners to hear only noise is "tantamount to being oblivious to the structures of meaning that anchored sounding to the hermeneutic world of the slaves." To hear only noise is to "remain removed from how slave soundings probed their circumstances and cultivated histories and memories." (Cruz, 1999: 42) Similarly, the noisy anger of the new musicians seemed strange, surprising, and unfathomable to many [mostly white] critics, along with the idea that blacks might actually have something to be angry about.
>
> (2008: 44)

My ability to make sense of it all didn't come from a sudden awakening to the ongoing historical realities of white supremacy, but rather to a conversation with a friend. "You need to reorient yourself", he said. "Imagine it's a sculpture and from one angle it makes no sense. Perhaps if you move a little, or go round the other side it'll reveal itself to you." (I paraphrase, it has been a long time.) This didn't quite work: I walked around and around the music, but could make no sense of it. I concentrated on the basslines, but they anchored nothing. I concentrated on the drumming, but it never let me settle. I concentrated on the saxophones, but only the vaguest semblances of melody made themselves known to me before fleeing off into the wholly unsatisfactory maelstrom.[15]

I don't remember which album I was listening to when it finally clicked—most likely one by Cecil Taylor or Archie Shepp. But it really did click: I was

swept away by those lines of flight. I stopped listening from outside and went with them into the improvisation. I no longer observed it from afar but joined with it. Finding that the chaos was in fact a 'multidominant' form of self-organization (Lewis, 2000; Borgo, 2005), I began to understand it as a place. A place full of meaning. The musical matter didn't need me to impose a form on it. It had its own, brilliant, complex form that constantly shifted, reflecting the conditions of its production. I could not step in the same place twice—the loss of stable vantage point and horizon wasn't anti-utopian but utterly, wonderfully utopian (Steyerl, 2011). An overwhelmingly joyful topophilia emerged from the constant play of difference. I registered the intra-sections of rhythm, timbre, melody and volume as intersections of a city. I felt how each musical action opened up a new vista (or perhaps shut down one that had already emerged, as if I were on an unfamiliar bus route, which would suddenly turn away from a view only to reveal a new one). I didn't *understand* this place, but after spending a while there I knew I loved it, despite—or perhaps because of—this lack of understanding. I felt it expanding my capacities. I felt it showing me how we might live. I felt the joy of utopia. I felt it turning me around to look at those outside the place, where I had been until recently, and then I felt the no that mediates the relationship between utopia and our world, which now appeared patently ridiculous.

Yet might the fact that I can articulate this place as utopia not be indicative of its failure to be utopian? [16] Entering into utopias that exist within the world as it is can be a thoroughly estranging experience, in which subjects—especially those who otherwise carry various privileges—find themselves to be affectively alienated. But these utopias are still within a world we know; and it is possible to navigate them slowly but surely until we are convinced of their goodness. A place beyond this world (a 're*place*ment') such as those visited when listening to free jazz may not be so easy for those who benefit from the inequality of this world to navigate, let alone articulate as utopias. After all, the fact that the societies depicted in classic utopian novels so easily persuade time-travellers socialized by patriarchal, bourgeois societies of their goodness is in no small part because they fail to substantially challenge those norms (Ferns, 1999). How would Julian West or Edward Guest react to a world without white supremacy? Would they articulate it as a utopia? Or would such a world be so utterly alien to them—and they to it—that they would be unable to articulate anything at all? Might an album like The Ornette Coleman Double Quartet's *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation*, which remains impenetrable to me to this day, be all the more utopian for the fact I still cannot make any sense of it? Utopia(nism) begins in this world, but opens us up to worlds we cannot even dream of.

Notes

1. An exploration of how a 'no' might be affirmative is the 2012 film *No*, which fictionalizes the successful campaign for a 'No' vote in Chile's 1988 Referendum,

which asked voters whether Pinochet should remain as President for another eight years without further elections. Initially, the 'No' campaign seeks to highlight the abuses of the Pinochet regime, but the (fictional) advertising worker René Saavedra persuades it to adopt a more positive vision, focusing on the happiness that might flourish in a Pinochet-free Chile. As history records, this positive, rainbow powered 'No' triumphed.

2. I protest a little too much here, perhaps. An attempt to disavow my own responsibility in asinine reproductions of utopia(nism)? And of course we should not refuse the hope that may be produced even in such ultra-cramped spaces. Even holidays, after all, can affect how we behave in this world.

3. Such 'creative liberalism' seems to be in retreat following the latest crisis of capitalism, however, with 'traditional,' disciplinary modes of organizing the space and time of the school increasingly back in fashion—at least in the United Kingdom.

4. Interestingly, Gold suggests that other forms of capitalist organization, which we might recognize as more Fordist/Taylorist, are more akin to the string quartet as 'every action between the individuals is defined, and there's leeway in the way you express these ideas, but you're not being asked to change anything, you're not being asked to improve anything. . . . You are duplicating an idea that is fixed in time' (quoted in Laver, 2013: criticalimprov.com).

5. Here, the relative power that corporations have over improvisatory 'trainers' means that they reflect 'in a twisted sense . . . the kind of critical student that a Paulo Freire might dream about—students who are empowered enough to be willing to challenge the decentred pedagogue at every turn' (Laver, 2013: criticalimprov.com). Whilst acknowledging that this is 'twisted,' it seems a strange move to equate the power of corporations to render people unemployed with the power of students to shape the direction of their education.

6. This is not, of course, to deny the importance of reforms, but those that have made a positive contribution to the quality of life have come about not simply through the kindness of reformers, but because of the confrontation of capital and the state with considerably more radical methods and aims; and—relatedly—because cost-benefit analyses by elites reveal reforms to be favourable to their interests (Nieburg, 1962; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2000; Conley & Temini, 2001; Aidt & Jensen, 2011; Libcom, 2012).

7. Composition is a key term in the autonomist tradition, which sees identities being continually (re)produced through struggle and performance. Berardi and Virno take this musical metaphor further, suggesting that the performance needs a 'score,' albeit one that influences rather than determines the nature of this 'performance.' Eden questions whether this is a score at all, writing that 'a score after all *is* a master manuscript notating a single specific piece of music, rather than the more general capacities put to work during performance by talented performers' (Eden 2012: 48, fn. 55)—although this ignores the work done by more experimental forms of musical score.

8. They reference Endnotes (2011), Baroque and Eanelli (2012) and Sky Palace (2012). Similar arguments have been made by John Holloway (2002), Theorie Communiste (2011), Chen (2013) and Endnotes (2013).

9. Their argument is primarily aimed at educational discourses but has clear relevance for any claim to a decolonial utopianism more broadly.

10. Tuck and Yang criticize the fallacy of 'colonial equivocation,' in which 'all struggles against imperialism' are described as 'decolonizing,' creating 'a convenient ambiguity between decolonization and social justice work, especially among people of color, queer people, and other groups minoritized by the settler nation-state. ' "We are all colonized,' may be a true statement but is deceptively embracive and vague, its inference: "None of us are settlers" (2012: 17).

11. Fisher specifically named Syriza, Podemos, the Scottish Nationalist Party and the 'Kurdish women's movement,' although in the case of the former three his

excitement seemed more around the energies that these parties mobilized and mobilized off rather than the content of their politics per se. Susan McManus also located an affective utopianism in the SNP (2015), although unlike Fisher she framed this through a cautious, pessimistic hope far more in keeping with the approach taken in this book.

12. For a discussion of Deleuze's engagement with negativity, see Noys (2011) or Culp (2015).

13. It seems a little unlikely that Sabul would use 'hierarchy' so readily if Anarresti struggle to understand inferiority and superiority. Later, in A-Io, the bourgeois Vea points out to Shevek that it is better have a formal hierarchy because then relations of power are clear to all (Le Guin, 2006: 191). Joreen (Jo Freeman) makes a similar argument in 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' (2012), although conflates 'structure' with 'hierarchy' (see Levine, 2012 for a critical response).

14. I discuss the shortcomings in this regard—of both Anarresti society and the narrative of *The Dispossessed*—in Bell (2016). Delany (2009) and Moylan (2014: 87–114) also advance a number of important claims.

15. This inability to make sense of free jazz can be likened to the students of science fiction Tom Moylan discusses in *Scraps of the Untainted Sky*, who fail to 'read it on its own formal terms. Too often they come to s[cience] f[iction] from their experience with literary modes more ideologically attuned to the society they know and are taught to love and obey. That is, they tend, initially at least, to read sf by way of an assumed realism or mimeticism in which the stories they encounter are set in motion in settings that they assume are ones with which they are familiar. Or if they accept the settings as unfamiliar, too quickly conclude that the narrative is still comfortably knowable by means of existing social rules; or, alternatively, they find it to be consolingly unknowable because they can then regard the entire text as mere fantasy, and therefore meaningless. Put simply, they don't get sf because they don't realize the consequences, formally and logically, of the text's particular mechanics—namely, its ability to generate cognitively substantial yet estranged alternative worlds' (2000: 5). This inability may, of course, be a subconscious refusal: to accept estrangement is to question the structures of power that benefit them.

16. Here it would undoubtedly be possible to undertake a Bourdieuean critique of the 'gentrification' of free jazz: the manner in which it has been packaged up to appeal to people precisely like me so they can reproduce their sense of self as culturally sophisticated individuals.

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(An Ambiguous) Conclusion

Two ambiguities have played a central role in the theory of utopia(nism) outlined in this book. The first is constitutive: utopia is a place produced through the intra-action of the 'good' and the 'no': a ceaseless oscillation between affirmation and negation; between ecstatic joy and all-too-necessary joy-killing. The second is evaluative. No one can say, for certain, that a given place is a utopia. There is no vantage point from which such a claim can be made, and the more certainty with which any such claim is made the more dangerous it becomes. Claims to utopia can all too easily mask and enable dystopia.

Given this, it would be remiss of me to end this book with anything other than further ambiguity, and I want to suggest that attachment to utopia—not to *a* utopia—but rather to the concept of utopia itself must be ambiguous. It has been the one constant throughout this book, utopia: the rock around which much uncertainty, caution and rethinking has swirled. That uncertainty, caution and rethinking has washed bits of it away but has, I hope, added to it as well. Utopia, to borrow from Heraclitus, 'is not the same and is' (2003: 51). Yet there is only so much difference any form can withstand before it is not. Many would no doubt argue that I have already reached that point. I may have paid it fidelity through its etymology, and I may have engaged with practices and places that others have also considered utopian, but the subversion is too much. What once named a mode of political praxis operating from the future into the present and oriented around a transcendent vision of the moral good is now repurposed to describe almost the inverse: a mode of praxis that creates good place immanently, operating from the present into the future. Indeed, such praxis has explicitly been labeled as anti-utopian by some (Tormey & Townshend, 2006: 52; Balasopoulos, 2011: 63).

I hope that my argument has proven sufficient to convince the reader that such praxis can be understood as utopian even if, from another angle, it might be thought of as anti-utopian (just as our post/anti-utopian present can be seen as a utopia when considered from a different perspective; and as a dystopia when viewed from yet another). If it has not, however, then I hope, at least, that utopia (the concept in general, rather than as outlined in this book) has functioned as a useful 'McGuffin': an ostensibly important object that provides an excuse

to explore other areas of interest. Rethinking utopia has, after all, entailed rethinking numerous 'adjacent concepts'—power, freedom, democracy—and exploring a range of texts and practices that are of considerable interest in their own right. In this, perhaps the very concept 'utopia' has performed the utopian function itself: I know that in researching and writing this book I have been estranged from ideas I previously held (including some I didn't know I held), and now have a better idea of how things might be otherwise.

Even if the concept of utopia I have outlined in this book does convince, it could—if practiced—end up hoisted by its own petard. After all, its insistence that the future is unknowable in advance must stretch to the concept of utopia itself, and if we take the need for a decolonized and decolonizing utopianism seriously, then we must acknowledge that this may entail abandoning the term. A decolonized United States of America would not, after all, be the United States of America; and the twentieth century saw numerous African states disappear as former colonial powers withdrew. If the island of Utopia were to be decolonized it would cease to be the island of Utopia, maybe becoming Abraxa once again: the name it had before the arrival of King Utopos and his settlers. Utopia the concept is perhaps more ethically viable than Utopia the state, but given its imbrication with colonialism it may be that a decolonizing praxis abandons the term, or comes up with its own alternative.

That place I visited when listening to free jazz. Was it called Utopia, or did it have another name?

A name that none of us can yet speak.

A name that is not yet.

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